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DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

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CONTENTS

4 BARK AT THE MOON

By Robert J. Schwalb

Out from the darkness came wolves, eyes blazing, bloody tongues wagging, barks and howls breaking the tranquil quiet. Now folk bar their doors and shutter their windows until the swollen moon shrinks once more and the nightmare ends ... until the next full moon. A feature-length adventure for characters of levels 5-7.

47 THE WHISPERING GLADE

By Steve Winter

A peaceful glade in the forest offers the promise of a quiet night's repose on your journey, but ancient whispers will not be silenced. A site-based encounter for characters of levels 12-14.

56 COURT OF THE BRAMBLE QUEEN

By Ari Marmell

Selephra, the Bramble Queen, is a creature of growth and joy turned dark and twisted by the worst urges of both fey and mortals. From her home in the Grieving Palace and from her position in the Green Court of the Feywild, she manipulates events in a quest to quench her burning wrath in a deluge of blood.

63 EXPLORE Q'BARRA PART 2

By Keith Baker

Dragonborn. Lizardfolk. Kobolds. Troglodytes. In some tales, they hunger for human flesh, while in others, they consume dragonshards and sacrifice prisoners on bloody altars to dragons and demons. Now, in the wake of the Mourning, they are growing restless, and tales are told of an army massing at an obsidian palace in the deep jungle.

3 EDITORIAL

By Steve Winter

The tools and rules of dramatic structure apply to Dungeons & Dragons® adventures just as much as they do to films, novels, plays, and comic books.

71 EYE ON THE REALMS: SILENT SAIL

By Ed Greenwood

Small, secretive local cabals of merchants are everywhere in the Realms, and seemingly always have been. One of the most successful, in a city infamous for its cabals, is "The Silent Sail" of Marsember.

74 SAVE MY GAME

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

When filling out your holiday gift lists, don't overlook the person who brings you so much entertainment throughout the year by sitting behind the DM's screen.

ON THE COVER
Illustration by Tyler Jacobson

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DUNGEON

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Dramatic Structure

When game designers and magazine editors try to define roleplaying games, one idea that always comes up is that of cooperative storytelling. We sit around a table, a dorm room, or possibly even a computer network, and engage in a form of storytelling that is part improvisational theater, part tug of war. Seldom does anyone take issue with this definition ... and I'm not going to, either.

There's a sense among many players and DMs, however, that because D&D is a different type of storytelling from the more familiar forms of books, comics, and films, that it can ignore the dramatic rules those other media adhere to. That's where I start to grind my teeth.

The structure of drama was established millennia ago in epic poems, plays, and songs, which themselves evolved from even older myths and campfire tales. The form changes slightly between cultures, eras, and media, but the basics remain the same. Every story begins with the setup (act 1), builds tension through the confrontation (act 2), and sorts it all out for better (comedy) or worse (tragedy) in the resolution (act 3).

That structure isn't universal; occasionally a groundbreaking storyteller breaks the mold and achieves brilliant results. Those of us who aren't literary geniuses do well by sticking to the rules.

If we accept that D&D is a form of storytelling, then the requirements of story structure apply to DMs and adventure writers just as much as to novelists, playwrights, and screenwriters. As a unique form, RPGs have some unique adaptations ... but perhaps not as unique as we'd like to think.

For example, act 1 of an adventure—the setup—tends to be very short. Characters typically meet a patron who needs their help, get some exposition from that character, and launch directly into act 2. Alternatively, they might stumble right into the main plot on their own with hardly any act 1 at all.

Act 2 occupies the bulk of the adventure as characters fight their way through a series of conflicts before finally cornering the villain. Then act 3 kicks in for the final confrontation—and that's usually where it ends. Seldom do we get a real denouement, a 'scouring of the Shire' to bring it all home after the chief evil has been vanquished.

In *Dungeon*, we publish three types of adventures: encounters or encounter sites (1-3,000 words) that are like one-act plays; side treks or delves (4-6,000 words) that are like short, off-Broadway productions; and feature adventures (8-16,000 words) that are the hour-long TV dramas and feature films of the magazine. Each should have a setup, a confrontation, and a resolution, whether it's a one-session delve or a multilevel marathon.

This month, we're happy to bring a grand epic to your table: "Bark at the Moon" weighs in at around 23,000 words, making it the biggest adventure that we've run since the Scales of War campaign wrapped up in February. It's so big that we've split it in half for easier handling.

We're very excited to bring this adventure to your table and to feature it as our year-end capper, a sort of act 3 for 2010 adventures. We intend to get more variety into both the length and levels of adventures in 2011. Let us know whether and how "Bark at the Moon" meets your campaign needs at dndinsider@wizards.com.

Bark at the Moon

An Adventure for Characters of Levels 5-7

By Robert J. Schwalb

Illustration by William O'Connor ✦ Cartography by Jason Engle

The long, peaceful years shattered in one bloody night. Out from the darkness came wolves, eyes blazing, bloody tongues wagging, barks and howls breaking the tranquil quiet that defined life in Silver Lake. These were no ordinary wolves; good steel and stout oak seemed only to incense them. The folk barred their doors and shuttered their windows, waiting for the time when the swollen moon would shrink once more and end the nightmare. Is this attack an isolated occurrence—just an unlucky event none were prepared for—or does it presage some darker events?

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Centuries ago, lycanthrope refugees fled persecution in mortal realms and took refuge in a corner of the Feywild called Brokenstone Vale. Their large numbers and savagery sparked conflict with the neighboring eladrin lords that erupted into a decades-long war. Mounting losses compelled the Court of Stars to sue for peace. The eladrin relinquished all claim to the land the lycanthropes had conquered in exchange for a promise from the werebeasts that they would press no further and add no new territory to their already substantial gains. The Beast Lords, also weakened by their losses, accepted the terms. Thus an uneasy peace has existed between the two peoples for centuries.

Neither side has accepted this peace well. Many eladrin princes felt that the Court had been too eager to reach a truce with the savage host and feared that once the werebeasts recovered, they would renew their attacks. What the eladrin did not see was the lycanthropes in their tangled valleys turning against one another, razing each other's castles, and devolving to a level of savagery the eladrin could barely comprehend. Both sides nursed a belief that the fabled War of the Pelt could have been won for once and all, if only they'd had more soldiers, more resources, more time.

That was long, long ago. The war is still remembered, but few eladrin have living memories of it or carry the scars of its battles. One who does is a disgraced and insane fey knight named Querelian. He was driven mad by grief when his beloved warrior maiden, Omoraphala, was slain by a werewolf lord on the shore of Silver Lake in the natural world. Querelian bound her spirit to the spot where she died until the day when he had slaughtered the lycanthrope hosts and none remained. In the ages that followed, she has endured while Querelian's power has diminished.

Now Querelian has seized upon a plan that will spark the war anew. Gnomes working for Querelian have infiltrated Brokenstone Vale and are fomenting discord between the sullen lycanthrope clans. The gnomes use misdirection and illusion to fan the sparks of old hatreds into the roaring flames of open war. Then the blood-thirsting lycanthropes will spill across the border and force the eladrin to renew the war, regardless of what the eladrin want. Central to Querelian's plan is the murder of Viktor Mazan, last of the werebeast lords of old. When Mazan's corpse is found by his kin, war will surely follow.

Thus far, however, the lycanthropes seem content to bicker among themselves. Those who slip out of the Vale to hunt have ventured into the natural world, where their actions are not constrained by old truces and where victims are plentiful.

Synopsis

While camping in the wilderness, the characters find the tracker Regina Tress surrounded by wolves. Once the heroes dispatch the beasts, Tress reveals that she is seeking aid in the fight against the darkness enfolding her community, Silver Lake. Should the characters help, they find Silver Lake terrorized by lycanthropes. Investigation into local legends as well as defeating the werewolves reveals that the monsters hail from Wolfheart, a tiny island rising from the mist-shrouded lake.

The island is a fey crossing, and heroes who set foot on it find themselves in the Feywild, at Brokenstone Vale. They should recognize immediately that war is brewing—the lycanthrope clans are at each other's throats, and many are turning their feral eyes outward to the rich lands beyond their secluded valley. The heroes have several opportunities to learn the truth and, though the lycanthropes are no innocents, it should be clear that powerful forces are sparking a new war for their own, dark purposes.

To avert an unimaginably savage war, the heroes must rescue the werewolf lord Viktor Mazan from his captors and expose the conspiracy that threatens to drench the Feywild in blood.

Sequence of Events

As the characters progress through the adventure, certain events occur at specific times. Some events happen no matter what, but others can be delayed or stopped altogether by adventurers who follow the right course of action.

3 AM: Regina Tress falls to the ground and is surrounded by the werewolves. Her scream awakens the characters.

6 PM: The fey crossing at Wolfheart opens.

9 PM: The renegade werewolves attack Silver Lake.

Midnight: The Jagged Fangs attack the trading post at the edge of Brokenstone Vale and capture Viktor Mazan.

2 AM: The Jagged Fangs return to their encampment, where they interrogate Mazan.

3 AM: Viktor Mazan is executed. His corpse is dumped in a spot where other werebeasts are sure to find it.

5 AM: Mazan's body is found and the furious clans muster to cross the river and renew their war against the eladrin.

6 AM: Querelian dispatches ravens carrying warnings to the eladrin city Mithrendain in the hope

that the eladrin will send forces to wipe out the werebeasts. War seems a certainty.

Running this Adventure

"Bark at the Moon" presents several discrete locations that are connected by clues and events unfolding in the story. The order of presentation suggests the most likely way they will unfold, but it is not the only way. Players will choose their path based on the information they collect. Doing so might mean that the characters miss certain encounters or move too slowly to affect the plot. Don't force them into the 'correct' actions. If players make mistakes, impose consequences and let the heroes deal with them.

The adventure itself is split into five parts: the initial encounter with Regina Tress; exploring the village of Silver Lake and learning the legend of Wolfheart Island; investigating the Fae Barrow; exploring Wolfheart Island; and the climactic events in Brokenstone Vale. Parts 1 through 3 are presented here; parts 4 and 5 will be presented in a second installment next week.

MANAGING DISEASE

The lycanthropes all carry disease and can spread it to characters through combat. The adventure features four different types of werebeasts, so heroes could contract up to four diseases at once. Adventurers suffering from multiple diseases face a serious problem. If you find the characters are not up to the challenges thanks to extensive infection, you might scale back the combat encounters or drop some additional ways to overcome the diseases in the heroes' paths. Your best resource in this regard is Yura the Healer. Simply give her the Cure Disease ritual from the *Player's Handbook*. The characters just need to supply the components.

Preparing the Adventure

The adventure should begin in a mountainous region near a lake or coast. The environment's details are intentionally left vague so that you can adapt it to whatever setting you run. In the Nentir Vale, Silver Lake might become Lake Wintermist. In the Forgotten Realms, Silver Lake could be in Aglarond, in the Tannath Mountains north of the Yuirwood. In Eberron, the Eldeen Reaches is ideal. For *Dark Sun*, consider placing Silver Lake in the Ringing Mountains; instead of a human village, the people would be halflings.

In addition to reading through the adventure and familiarizing yourself with the plot and encounters, you might review skill challenges in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or *DM's Kit*, as well as rules governing diseases. If you have the *Manual of the Planes*, be sure to read the section on "Brokenstone Vale" on page 42. The descriptions included here are sufficient to explore these sites, but the *Manual of the Planes* offers additional, useful details on both the location and the plane where it's found.

Treasure

The adventure offers ten treasures to characters who participate in the encounters and overcome the challenges. With the exception of *Moonclaw*, you choose the magic items that the adventurers discover. Draw from the players' wish lists to help make your selections. If you have a larger or smaller party, or a group of higher or lower level, you might adjust the number of magic items the heroes discover along the way.

Adventure Hooks

The adventure assumes that the characters happen upon Silver Lake and its plight while they are traveling through the wilderness, and this is probably the best way to launch the adventure. The less the characters are prepared in advance, the better. Find a reason to draw the characters out from their home base using hooks and unresolved quests from previous adventures. Alternatively, you can use the following ideas to spark your imagination.

Tracking a Fugitive: The adventurers are hired to track down an escaped criminal and have followed his signs deep into the forest.

Waylaid: Some disaster struck the characters en route to a city. This disaster could be bandits, a storm, or an avalanche.

Rumor: While staying at a roadside inn, the heroes hear rumors of troubles plaguing the tiny town of Silver Lake.

Part One: A Cry in the Dark

The adventure begins at the characters' camp many miles from civilization, shortly after the adventurers have completed an extended rest.

When you're ready to begin, read:

A soft wind rustles the branches overhead. Through them you see the pregnant harvest moon, its rust red color dappling the ground with long shadows. The fire sparks and spits. The breeze dies down. All is quiet. All is still.

The tranquility is shattered by an echoing wolf howl that soon becomes a chilling chorus. Moments later, you hear a scream shrill with terror and pain.

Growls and whines fill the air, making it easy to follow the sounds to their source. The characters can cross the distance in just a few minutes. If they follow the noises, go to **Encounter 1: A Company of Wolves**.

Regina Tress

Regina Tress is a skilled ranger and tracker who has lived and worked in this forest her whole life. She's a striking human woman at the doorstep to middle age, noticeable chiefly in the gray that sprinkles her short, black hair. Hanging from a leather cord around her neck is a small, round, wooden token etched with an arching line above a horizontal line. When talking with the heroes, she frequently touches the medallion. If asked about it, she explains it is a memento from her mentor, a woman who taught her wilderness lore and ranger signs.

Regina is loyal to her people and devoted to their safety, which is why she led the courageous and ultimately doomed rescue mission to Wolfheart to free the villagers taken by the werewolves. The mission failed, and she was the sole survivor. She was traveling south to drum up help against the darkness closing around her people.

The characters' timely appearance leads her to believe that the spirits placed them in her path. She doesn't even ask the heroes to help; she just assumes they will. Should the adventurers seem reluctant, she is confused, and then pleads with them to help save her people before it's too late. She carries only 200 gp for traveling money, but she is desperate and will offer to pay almost any sum to gain the characters' aid, even if she knows it's more than the village can pay.

QUEST: SAVE SILVER LAKE

6th-Level Major Quest (1,250 XP)
The characters complete this quest if they defeat the enemies that attack Silver Lake during the next night.

Regina knows the following information, which she may reveal based on the questions the players ask.

- Regina Tress comes from a fishing community called Silver Lake. Its lies about seven hours to the north.
- She was headed south toward the larger towns to get help.
- Silver Lake has never been plagued by gray wolves. Aside from a few missing sheep, the beasts caused no trouble.

- A few days ago, a wolf pack attacked a merchant caravan and killed several guards and the merchant, too. The next night, more wolves were spotted in the town. This behavior, coupled with the attacks, was alarming, but Regina believed she could handle it. Two nights ago, the wolves attacked the village. She helped defend the community and during the fight, she could have sworn one of the wolves stood on two legs. The next morning, several folk, including her husband Tomas, were missing.

- Local legends suggested the island Wolfheart was an accursed place, so it was where Regina started her search. She gathered several warriors for the mission, but it ultimately led to disaster and defeat with all but her in the expedition dead or missing.
- Wolfheart is believed to have once held a stronghold in ancient times. Rubble on the island and the sunken causeway suggest there is some truth to this tale.
- A DC 22 Heal or Insight check reveals Regina is injured. A DC 15 Diplomacy check or agreeing to the minor quest gets her to reveal a werewolf bit her.

QUEST: RECOVER TOMAS TRESS

6th-Level Minor Quest (250 XP)
Regina begs this from one character, starting with a primal character first, martial adventurer second, or the hero with the highest Charisma score if there are no primal or martial characters. The character completes this quest if he or she finds Tomas (living or dead) and returns him (or his body) to Silver Lake.

Regina Tress **Level 6 Striker**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP –

HP 49; **Bloodied** 24; **Surges** 7; **Surge Value** 12 **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 18 **Perception** +9
Speed 6

Traits

Werewolf Moon Frenzy Stage 2 (disease)
Regina has contracted werewolf moon frenzy stage 2. She takes a -2 penalty to Will and whenever she becomes bloodied, she makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to her.

Standard Actions

Battleaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage.

Twin Shot (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage.
Effect: Regina repeats the attack once against the same target or a different one.

Thwarting Shot (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of Regina's next turn.

Minor Actions

Shrouding Gloom ✦ Encounter
Requirement: Regina must have partial concealment or partial cover.
Effect: Regina makes a Stealth check to hide.

Triggered Actions

Hunter's Strike ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Trigger: Regina hits with an attack against an enemy granting her combat advantage.
Effect (No Action): The triggering attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

Heroic Effort ✦ Encounter
Trigger: Regina misses with an attack or fails a saving throw.
Effect (No Action): Regina gains a +4 racial bonus to the attack roll or the saving throw.

Skills Nature +9, Stealth +11

Str 15 (+5)	**Dex** 18 (+7)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 12 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 10 (+3)

Alignment good **Languages** Common, Goblin
Equipment hide armor, battleaxe, longbow, quiver with 30 arrows, adventurer's kit

Using Regina

If the characters agree to help Regina, even if it's only a halfhearted offer to come to the village and poke around a bit, then she joins the party as a companion character. If Regina survives the adventure, she returns to her life in Silver Lake (unless it serves a larger story purpose to have her travel on with the characters, of course).

Regina has contracted werewolf moon frenzy and is currently at the second stage of the disease. This could make her a liability unless the characters treat her. When she attacks an ally because of the disease, be sure to describe how she snarls and lunges with a savagery that passes as suddenly as it appeared. For easy reference, the disease is included below.

Werewolf Moon Frenzy **Level 6 Disease**

This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a –2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11–14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Troubleshooting

If the heroes don't investigate the screams, the werewolves kill and devour Regina Tress. The adventurers might come upon her remains—a gory mess only just recognizable as human—as they continue traveling. This might prompt them to identify her or at least find out where she came from. A DC 15 Nature check reveals that a small village, a hamlet really, probably lies a few miles to the north. (The character may have smelled smoke, or seen telltale signs of wood-gathering and other foraging nearby.)

If the characters are still not hooked, they might encounter werewolves en route to their destination, stumble across Silver Lake (or its ruins) on the way to or from their destination, or hear about the horrors that took place there. Reaching the settlement after the attack abridges the adventure, but the characters can still venture into the Feywild and deal with plot unfolding there. You can make up missed experience points, if you want, by using the additional encounters described at the end of the adventure.

Encounter 1: A Company of Wolves

Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

Setup

Regina Tress (R)
3 frenzied werewolves (W)
8 vicious wolves (V)

The lycanthropes and their wolf companions circle their fallen prey and jockey for the right to make the kill.

When the cjaracters reach the scene, read the following text aloud:

Wolves crowd around a prone, injured woman. Their golden eyes shine with hunger, drool runs from maws, and pink tongues loll between jagged teeth.

8 Vicious Wolves (V)	**Level 5 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 50
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	**Perception** +9
Speed 8	Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Harrier
The wolf gains combat advantage against any enemy adjacent to two or more of its allies.

Standard Actions

⊕ Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage, or 8 damage against a prone target. The target falls prone if the wolf has combat advantage against it.

Str 19 (+6)	**Dex** 16 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6)	**Int** 5 (-1)	**Cha** 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

3 Frenzied Werewolves (W)	**Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human	XP 250 each
HP 78; **Bloodied** 39	**Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16	**Perception** +9
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form)	Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

⊕ Bite (disease) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

⊕ Club (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 9 against a bloodied target.

⸸ Lycanthrope Fury ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf uses *claw* and *bite*. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8

Str 19 (+7)	**Dex** 17 (+6)	**Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 18 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Werewolf Moon Frenzy — Level 6 Disease

This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Tactics

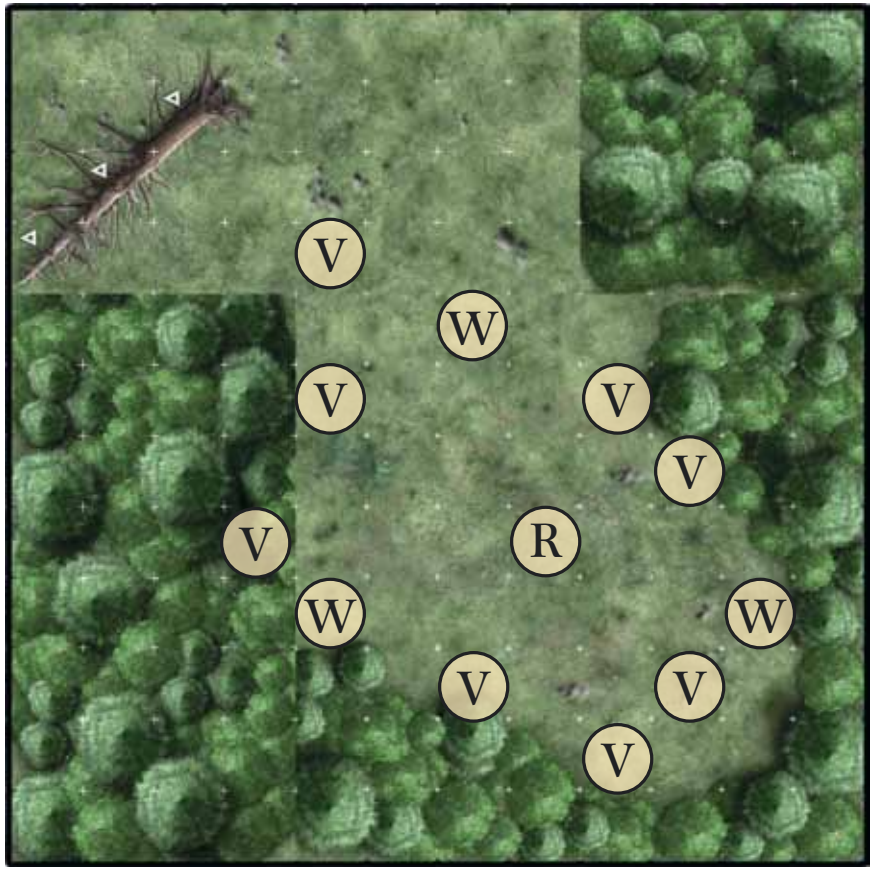
Each werewolf teams up with two or three wolves to knock their foes prone. Once a werewolf becomes bloodied, it switches to its hybrid form and uses *lycanthrope fury*. A werewolf flees if it drops to 20 hit points or less. The wolves flee if no werewolves remain.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light from the moon.

Fallen Log: The log counts as difficult terrain.

Trees: Squares containing trees are difficult terrain and lightly obscured.



Part Two: Silver Lake

Mist curls up from Silver Lake and spreads across the mountain valley, shrouding the land in a fog that seems resistant to the sun's best effort. Standing on the pebbled shore where fishermen push off to ply the still water, one can just make out a dark smudge, a spot of land in the distance. Its mere mention elicits warding gestures and terrified glances because, the locals readily reveal, Wolfheart is a place cursed and twisted by ancient magic. The tiny island is no place for anyone who hopes to see their golden years. When a wolf's howl splits the night, all look with panicked expressions toward the lake. Despite it being an island, they know that the evil born in that storied place walks the land once more.

Silver Lake is vital to the community sharing its name. Huddled on the shore is a tiny village of some seventy or so people. A winding, rutted road passes between the log houses and ends at the wharf jutting over the still water. Three meager farms claim the land around the community until the fields give way to the old gray pine forest. The trees command the terrain for many miles beyond until they reach the barren hills that become mountains lost behind snow and cloud.

The lake itself is still, its surface a mirror to the sky on the rare, clear day. Normally, mist rises from the cool water and hangs in the air, cloaking the entire area beneath a gloomy pall. Although the lake is forbidding, the folk who live along it survive on the whitefish swimming in the murky depth. Fishing is vital to Silver Lake's people—everyone here is involved in the trade in some way, whether they fish themselves or weave nets or build the skifflike boats that are unique to this stretch of shore. These boats are particularly shallow, drafting only about a foot into the water. No one recalls the reason for the boats' curious construction; that's just the way it's always been. Characters may discover why for themselves; the locals' ancestors knew about the now-forgotten causeway that is sunk about two feet below the dark water and extends from the island to within a few dozen yards from shore.

The island is barely visible from shore—a DC 23 Perception check is needed to spot its outline on any but the clearest days. Staring at it in the perpetual mist creates a sense of vague foreboding in the viewer. Although it's faint, this atmosphere of menace is strong enough to drive small game away from the nearby forest. Hunters must make do with rabbits, squirrels, grouse, and little else. The lack of small game means there also are not many dangerous carnivores in the region. Bears are sometimes seen at the edge of the woods on the northern shore, but none have troubled the community in many years. Humanoid monsters are also unknown in these parts. For these reasons, hunters are uncommon around Silver Lake, and the town has no militia for defense. One hasn't been needed—until now.

Locals claim that a keep stood on the island in olden times, and it was owned by elfin lords who watched over the werebeasts that prowled these lands. Those few souls who have visited the island say that now, the only hints of an old stronghold are worn rocks spotted with lichen. But they probably are no more than that—old rocks that just happen to suggest the shape of a tumbled foundation when seen from a particular angle and when the shadows are just right.

It's true, however, that odd artifacts sometimes appear on the shore. Children wandering on the beach often find old arrowheads, bits of statuary, or corroded coins bearing a likeness that some folk say brings to mind an elfin king.

In fact, the trees and mossy stones of the island conceal a crossing into the Feywild. Like most such crossings, it is open only at certain times. Silver Lake's residents know nothing concrete or useful about it, but they know enough to avoid the island "lest Old Brokentooth snatch them unawares."

Important Locations

Most buildings at Silver Lake are log houses that are home to one or two families. If the characters walk attentively through the town, the will see unusual scratches on the buildings and occasional splashes of dried blood. More signs of blood are on the ground, where townsfolk were killed by the wolves.

The following locations are important to the adventure. No map is provided; the specific layout of the village isn't important. If players are insistent, sketch something for them. The village is simply a haphazard collection of buildings surrounded by small, weedy gardens, with no plan or symmetry.

The Big House

A large longhouse commands the village's center. The walls are logs cemented in place with daub, and the sod roof is green with new growth. A round, mud brick chimney rises from the roof's middle.

This building serves double duty as the town's hall and main storage building where salted fish, grains, and other perishables are kept in the cool cellar dug deep under the structure. This is also the place where the villagers have chosen to make their stand against the attack they expect this night.

The only people here until nightfall are the injured folk who survived the first attack. They include two burly men named Ham and Gregor, and one woman, a half-elf called Anna. Ham suffered a nasty scratch, while both Gregor and Anna were bitten and have contracted werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1). They are feverish and restless.

Yura the Healer

Attending the injured is Yura, a young human woman with black hair and narrow features. Her clothes—a long skirt, blouse, and scarf—are spotted with blood, and dark circles ring her eyes. She is suspicious by nature, and every sentence she speaks seems to lilt up as if she were asking question. She is a skilled healer (Heal +7) and suspects that Gregor and Anna were sickened by the infected bites they suffered. A hero who befriends or impresses her, either through roleplaying or by an intentional use of Diplomacy (DC 15 Diplomacy check), also gets her to reveal that she knows a remedy for the sickness but she hasn't been able to harvest the needed ingredients. The villagers won't risk losing their only healer for an herb that may or may not work. If she gets a volunteer, she says, "Very good. Look for a violet flower, like a buttercup. The only place I'm sure it grows is near the Fae Barrow. Be careful. It is an unhappy place. I need a dozen or more roots." (See Part 3, "Fae Barrow," for details.)

Alternatively, if a character uses the Cure Disease ritual to aid Gregor and Anna, that adventurer gains a lifelong friend in Yura.

In thanks for their effort, Yura gives the characters five herbal poultices (level 3—*Adventurer's Vault*, page 28).

QUEST: HARVEST WOLFBANE

6th-Level Minor Quest (250 XP)
The character completes this quest if he or she harvests wolfbane from the Fae Barrow and returns the specimens to Yura at the Big House.

The Merry Face

A squat building made of raw logs and cement stands near the dock. A crooked chimney crawls up one side of the building, and from it issues dark smoke. A single door bearing the design of a crude, merry face leads inside.

The Taproom is Silver Lake's sole watering hole. It contains little more than a few fermentation barrels, bar, and crude wooden tables on a dirt floor. Smoke hangs heavy in the air, spilling in from the chimney and curling from the pipes that are perpetually smoked by the local fishermen who gather here.

The Merry Face serves house ale, smoked fish, and hard, bitter bread. The locals are normally welcoming to visitors, but the present troubles have left everyone suspicious and on edge. In order to lighten the mood and get the folks here talking, the characters need to win over the locals. They can achieve this automatically by buying a round of drinks, performing a lively song, telling an encouraging story, or simply addressing the fishermen and succeeding on a DC 15 Diplomacy check.

Upon changing the mood and chatting up the barflies, the adventurers can learn more about recent developments. The heroes can learn the following information through roleplaying or by making DC 11 skill checks using Bluff or Diplomacy. Or, the characters can get the salient bits from a successful DC 11 Streetwise check.

- "Saw 'em lass night me did. Wolves a'walkin' like men, eyes a'blazin' with all the fires in the Hells."
- "There was easily a dozen, though most ran on all fours."
- "I tried to warn folks, I did. 'Bout a month back, I seen wolves running across the water! I bring it

an' all I gets is a clout on me head and none ale that night."

- "If'n old Pok is telling the truth, then mebbe the old legends are true. My paps tole me to steer clear of Wolfheart for the man-beasts living there."
- "Aye. And look what happened to Tress when she went! Ain't none but her came back."
- "We ought to quit this accursed place and head south."
- "To hell wit you. I won't be running. This is me home. If'n Black Feather comes to snatch me soul this night, then to hell with her, too!"
- "See, this be the talk that gets us in trouble. Why, Father Upik says this is Melora's judgment. Someone angered her, and I can't say I'm surprised with all the blasphemy I'm hearing. Black Feather indeed."
- "Aw, shut it Fillek. You were too drunk to doff yer cap to Wild Woman last harvest if I recall."
- "So if'n it ain't them gods, then what?"
- "I say it's folk living among us! I heard they wear the skins of men by day and the hides of wolves by night."
- "Oh, so we're turning against our neighbors is it? I ain't seen no werebeast in these parts my whole life, and ain't nobody new around here but these folks. And, they claim they've come to help."
- "Such twaddle only makes us weak. The problem ain't with us or that misty island, no matter what Pok says. It's that blasted Fae Barrow, I'll warrant. Me Da said to steer clear o' the hill, for the faeries love mortals not. Gremlins and bookahs, leprechauns and ever tricksy unnatural creature as ever lived hides under that hill. You want ta curse's root, yeh need look no further than that blasted mound."

Story Award: Grant 150 XP to characters who chat up the locals enough to learn about the community and its lore.

Wild Woman's Shrine

A small, roofed wooden frame covers a stone altar decorated with wild flowers and burning candles. Images and runes cover the altar's sides.

Silver Lake's folk are not especially religious. The one holy site they have raised and maintain is the shrine to the Wild Woman, an aspect of Melora. A cursory examination of the altar reveals intricate runes and carvings all around its sides. The images depict fey warriors, likely elves or eladrin, battling lycanthropes. The scenes are violent, even grisly. The runes are gentle and flowing, done in the Rellanic script; any adventurer who can read Elven or Deep Speech can identify it as such. The language used is Elven. The runes tell the story of the War of the Pelt. Read aloud or paraphrase the following text if characters decipher the script:

Men in beast hides spilled into the unspoiled realms gifted unto the eladrin folk by Corellon himself and brought with them war and suffering, blood and death. With shining sword and girded in brilliant armor, the fey knights rode forth to battle the trespassers. For long years we fought, sometimes as victor, others in defeat. When the blood of our kin flowed like rivers and with the beasts still as numerous as the stars in the firmament, it was decided to strike an accord. Those lands seized by the hateful host would remain theirs to use as they saw fit. If they strayed beyond the Vale which we acceded to them, war would come again without abatement until every shapeshifter polluting the Land was nothing but bones and fodder for the carrion crows.

A single priest named Father Upik attends the shrine and sees to Silver Lake's spiritual needs. A few minutes after the characters inspect the shrine, he ambles up to them, supporting himself on a gnarled walking

stick. He's an ancient human with wispy white hair and sagging features. Upik wears a shapeless brown robe stained with the remnants of old meals. Despite his wizened appearance, he is mentally sharp and his piercing blue gaze doesn't miss a thing.

Upik knows a great deal about Silver Lake's lore and believes that the situation is hopeless. He reveals his grim prediction when and if the characters tell him they are here to help. Upik can supply the following information.

The Altar: "Curious, isn't it? My predecessor found it and believed it was a relic from the Wild Woman. Poor fool couldn't read a word of Elven. Anyway, he brought it here from the island and consecrated it in our Lady's name." Upik can translate the script if need be. "We weren't the first people to live here, of course. The Barrow, Wolfheart, and the place beyond all point to the faerie folk. The young ones find old arrowheads and bones all over these parts. What happened? I only know what the stone says, same as you."

Fae Barrow: "Don't pay any attention to the locals. If it isn't fish or ale, they fill in the holes in their heads with all sorts of strange speculation. They are right to fear that mound. Something's buried there, and that something attracts haunts. I suspect there's a faerie prince beneath the hill, and I'd bet that prince died in the war yon stone describes."

Wolfheart: "Aye, 'tis a right nasty place that. There was a tower or keep there long ago. You can tell from the ruins. The mist around the island isn't natural. I think it sources from something on the island. The old stories talk about doors to other worlds, places where this world washes up against another. Not sure if that's at all true, but something awful lives there. I know this because I became the village priest when my master ventured there after receiving a vision. I never saw him again. You know, if you could find out the truth about Wolfheart, the stone, and what's going on, I'd be very grateful."

QUEST: UNCOVER THE TRUTH ABOUT WOLFHEART

5th-Level Major Quest (1,000 XP)
The heroes complete this quest by passing through the fey crossing, exploring Brokenstone Vale, learning what's going on there, and reporting this information to Father Upik.

Searching Silver Lake

The people mill about, eyes fearful, possessions clutched to their breasts, all knowing doom awaits them at nightfall.

Many hours have passed since the last attack, and time and foot traffic have obscured many clues. Persistence and keen eyes can uncover secrets the enemies left behind. In this skill challenge, the adventurers work to uncover information by talking to locals, inspecting the town and its environs, and by identifying any evidence left behind by the attackers. You can run this skill challenge as an alternative or supplement to the roleplaying opportunities described above.

As always, feel free to grant successes from ritual use and clever ideas without die rolls. For example, the Water Walk ritual could let a character discover the hidden causeway.

Level: 6 (XP 250)

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Heal, History, Nature, Perception, Streetwise, special 1, special 2, special 3

Arcana (DC 15, maximum 1 success): A character who studies the mists for at least an hour or more and succeeds on the check identifies the mist as being magical in nature and confirms that it rises from a planar conjunction between the natural world and some other, probably the Feywild.

Athletics (DC 11, maximum 1 success): A character who explores the lake by swimming or wading, not just boating, discovers the submerged causeway.

Heal (DC 11, maximum 1 success): An adventurer can inspect the injuries of Anna, Ham, and Gregor and learn that they were inflicted by something other than a natural beast.

History (DC 21, maximum 1 success): A character recalls a legend about an ancient eladrin fortress said to appear in this vicinity in antiquity. A success by 5 or more reveals that it was destroyed during the fabled War of the Pelt. A great hero was said to have been buried nearby.

Nature (DC 15; 1 success using Heal or Perception must be made before using this skill; maximum 1 success): The character identifies the bites, claw marks, and prints as belonging to wolves, humans, and something in between.

Perception (DC 11, maximum 3 successes): This skill applies when a character just snoops around the village for several hours, assessing the evidence in general. The first success reveals claw marks on doors and exterior walls (and opens up Nature). A second success reveals wolf and human prints here and there through town. They lead to the rocky shore, where they can't be traced farther. A third success spots the hidden causeway about two feet below

the water's surface and extending all the way across to Wolfheart.

Streetwise (DC 11, 1d4 hours; maximum 3 successes): The adventurer talks to passersby on the street. The first success reveals that wolves came into the town shortly after moonrise. The second success finds a witness who saw a wolf transform into a wolf/man hybrid. A third success finds yet another witness who spotted the wolves literally racing across the water toward shore.

Special 1: If a character spends (or spent) time at the Merry Face and hears rumors from the patrons, the party earns 1 or 2 successes (DM's judgement).

Special 2: If a character spends (or spent) time at the Big House examining the injured folk, the party earns 1 success.

Special 3: If a character spends (or spent) time at the shrine and talks with Father Upik, the party earns 1 success.

Secondary Skills: Insight, special

Insight (DC 15): The adventurer notices that no one goes near the lake's edge. A success grants a +2 bonus on Streetwise checks related to this skill challenge.

Special: If Regina Tress accompanies the characters, the party gains a +2 bonus on all checks related to the skill challenge.

Success: The characters should know that the attacks originate from Wolfheart, werewolves are responsible (in case they haven't figured it out from Encounter 1), and that the werewolves are crossing the lake via an unsuspected, submerged causeway.

Failure: The characters may learn some or none of the above information. Add one werewolf to Encounter 2: Enemies at Moonrise.

Fey Crossing Opens

At 6 PM, just after the sun sets and the full moon climbs, the fey crossing at Wolfheart opens once more. Any adventurers outside when this occurs should see the following:

The mists covering the lake explode with color. Reds and blues, greens and violets all swirl behind the shimmering fog. Then, as quickly as the light appeared, it ends.

The Inevitable Attack

The lycanthropes return to the village to finish the task begun the night before. Expecting that the enemy will come back for them, the villagers plan to barricade themselves in the Big House. It's a hopeless effort. The wooden door, no matter how stout, won't stand up to a determined assault by the werebeasts.

Over the hours leading up to the attack, allow the heroes to make whatever preparations they wish. This is your chance to let the characters determine the battle's course by setting booby traps, performing rituals or martial practices, or preparing consumables that would prove useful in the fight. The villagers can help with preparations, but they are noncombatants and will be liabilities rather than help if they join the characters in combat—their warriors all died on Wolfheart. When the battle starts, the locals should hole up in the Big House as planned.

Characters aware of the wolfbane growing near the Fae Barrow might think this is a safe place for the villagers. Alternatively, the adventurers might learn about this if they visit the Barrow before the attack. Such thinking is correct. The werebeasts keep away from the Barrow—not because of the wolfsbane but because of the ghost lurking under the hill. If the characters think to lead the seventy or so Silver Lake residents to the Barrow, award the party 250 XP.

At 9 PM, with the moon climbing into the night sky, the werebeasts attack. See **Encounter 2: Enemies at Moonrise**.

Development: Characters searching the attackers' bodies find they all wear necklaces of strung-together, yellowed teeth. Heroes can also interrogate any prisoners they take and, with a successful DC 15 Intimidate check, learn the lycanthropes are members of the Jagged Fang clan and that they believe "the unfurred will all drown in blood once the pointed-ears are all dead." A success by 5 or more also uncovers that they are renegades who got lost and wound up on the island. They don't know how they got here or why. They want to return home to gain glory against their eladrin enemies.

Troubleshooting

The adventurers might skip over the village and head straight for Wolfheart. If so, they miss out on Encounter 2 and the werebeasts slaughter the defenseless villagers. When the characters return, they might track these villains, chase them across the wilderness, or find that the werebeasts have set an ambush for the absent adventurers.

Another wrinkle comes if the characters deal with the werewolves, dust off their hands, and leave, believing that the job is done. The clues should lure the characters to Wolfheart, but if not, let them go where they wish. A few weeks later, they might learn some new disaster befell Silver Lake and beasts wiped out the people there. Curious or remorseful adventurers might then return and complete the mission they started.

Encounter 2: Enemies at Moonrise

Encounter Level 8 (1,750 XP)

Setup

2 wereboars (B)
4 frenzied werewolves (W)
5 wererat scum (R)

The lycanthropes start on the street. The wererats are in Tiny rat form, hidden in the roof and walls of the Big House. They don't join the fight until the start of the third round.

If the characters have made any preparations to ambush the werebeasts, the heroes gain surprise when the enemies move into position.

When the characters see the werebeasts, read:
Two hulking, boarlike humanoids lead four wolf humanoids out from the lake. They all heft weapons and clamber up the shore toward you.

2 Wereboars (B)	**Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human	XP 250 each
HP 76; **Bloodied** 38	**Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17	**Perception** +4
Speed 6 (8 in boar form)	

Traits

Regeneration
The wereboar regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the wereboar takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Bloodied Resilience
While bloodied, the wereboar gains a +2 bonus to all defenses.

Standard Actions

Gore (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wereboar must be in boar or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends) or ongoing 10 damage (save ends) if the wereboar is bloodied. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts wereboar moontusk fever (stage 1).

Maul (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wereboar must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wereboar alters its physical form to appear as a Medium boar, a unique human, or a hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Triggered Actions

Death Strike
Trigger: The wereboar drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The wereboar uses *gore* or *maul*.

Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +11, Intimidate +8

Str 20 (+8)	**Dex** 10 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment hide armor, maul

Wereboar Moontusk Fever	**Level 6 Disease**

The raging fever burns away resilience and resolve.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a –2 penalty to saving throws while bloodied.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target can roll only one saving throw at the end of its turn, even if it is affected by multiple effects.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target must roll twice and use the lower result when rolling a saving throw while bloodied.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11–14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

4 Frenzied Werewolves (W) **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 250 each

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39 — **Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Bite (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Club (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 9 against a bloodied target.

Lycanthrope Fury ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf uses *claw* and *bite*. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Werewolf Moon Frenzy **Level 6 Disease**
This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a –2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11–14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

5 Wererat Scum (R) **Level 5 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 50 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +2
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17 **Perception** +5
Speed 6, climb 4 (rat or hybrid form only) Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 5 damage, or 6 if the wererat has combat advantage against the target.

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 3 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the wererat, it also takes ongoing 3 damage and a –2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).

Move Actions

Rat Scurry ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat form.
Effect: The wererat shifts up to its speed.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wererat alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny rat, a Medium unique human, or a Small hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Triggered Actions

Werebeast Resilience ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The wererat takes damage from an attack.
Effect (Free Action): The wererat rolls a saving throw. On a success, the damage drops to 0.

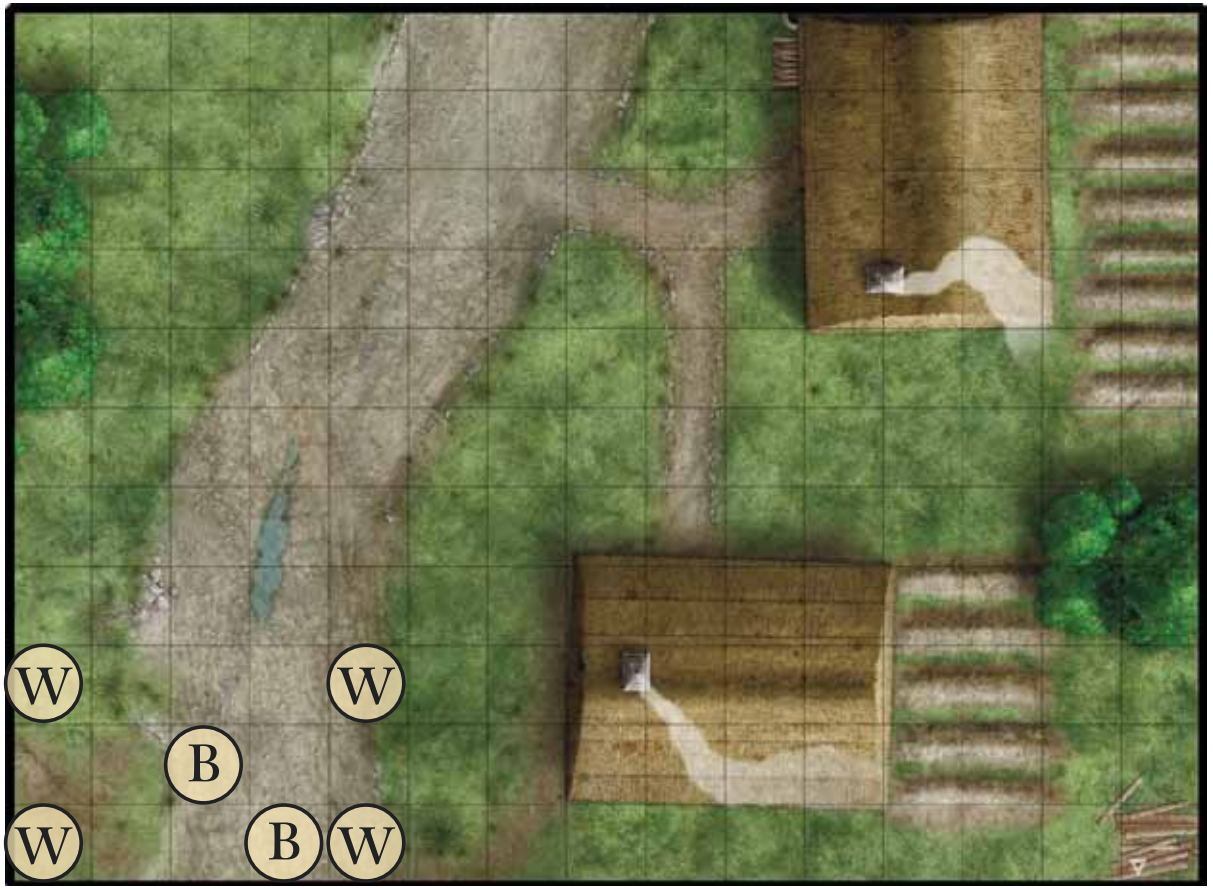
Str 11 (+2) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

Tactics

Once the werebeasts spot the heroes, the wereboars use *change shape* to assume boar form and then charge the closest enemies to *gore* them. On their next turn, the wereboars use *change shape* again to assume their hybrid forms so they can use both *gore* and *maul*, using the latter only against enemies already taking ongoing damage.

The werewolves use *change shape* to assume wolf form and boost their speed. They use *bite* against as many enemies as they can and then revert back to hybrid form, using *claw* or *club* against bloodied enemies.

The wererats scurry out from their hidden positions into the Big House, where they assume hybrid forms and attack the noncombatant villagers using *bite* or *dagger*. Any adventurer within 5 squares of the Big House hears the screams automatically. Characters further away must succeed on a DC 12 passive Perception check. Should a character enter the Big House, the wererats return to rat form and then use *rat scurry* to slip outside where they can rely on their allies for protection.



Features of the Area

Houses: A creature can enter a house. The doors are locked and require a DC 16 Strength check to smash open or DC 15 Thievery check to unlock. A creature can attack through the door and gains cover while positioned there.

Gardens and Lumber: Squares containing gardens and stacked lumber are difficult terrain.

Part Three: Fae Barrow

Heading west along the shore takes a traveler to a curious hill standing at the lake's edge. What makes it strange is that it is both perfectly round and completely free from the trees and bracken that cover the ground on either side. It is a grassy hill that clearly is not a natural feature of the landscape.

The Fae Barrow marks the final resting place of Omaphara, the fey warrior maiden and Querelian's true love. The pair, along with many brave fey warriors, fought the werebeasts here in a pitched battle that raged for many days. In the end, the werebeasts were driven back, but not before they took Omaphara's life. A grieving Querelian interred his partner here so she could watch over the land she died defending.

The characters might have come to the Barrow to harvest wolfbane (they can easily harvest the amount requested) or to follow up a lead gained in Silver Lake.

When the adventurers approach the Fae Barrow, read:

A hill rises not far from the lake's edge. It is strangely bare of the flora that blankets the land around it. Violet flowers grow in patches around the hill's base.

There is an eerie silence about the hill, a quiet that belies the danger haunting the land nearby. Characters searching the hill find no entrance, no sign that it is anything but a circular heap of earth. After a few minutes, the danger reveals itself. Proceed with **Encounter 3: Barrow Guardians**.

The Maiden Emerges

After the heroes dispatch the enemies, Omaphara's ghost emerges from the hill to address the characters. This happens before the adventurers can take a short rest. They'll be able to rest after dealing with Omaphara.

When you're ready, read:

A sudden chill grips the air, so cold you can see your breath. The cause for this change reveals itself when a pale cloud rises from the hillside, slowly resolving itself into a humanoid form that is slim and achingly beautiful, the perfect vision of an eladrin warrior maiden dressed in shimmering chainmail and armed with bow and blade. Her pale eyes settle upon you and she speaks in a faint, wispy voice, saying, "What trouble do I find at my door? Mortals? If you have come seeking plunder, you will pay with blood for your offense!"

Although she's quick to make the threat, Omaphara does not attack. Curiosity stays her hand, at least for now. The characters should use the reprieve to win her over and gain her aid.

While running this skill challenge, be liberal with the bonuses you grant to the players for good roleplaying. An impassioned argument might grant a significant bonus to a check or even allow the character to forgo making the check and earn one or more successes automatically.

Omaphara does not interfere with the casting of rituals, provided the effects are not directed at her.

Level: 8 (700 XP)
Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)
Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight, Intimidate, Nature, special

Arcana (DC 24, 4 successes): The character uses his or her magical senses to ascertain the force binding the ghost to this place. The first success reveals that an ancient ritual binds the ghost. The second success reveals that the ritual can be undone. Explaining this fact to the ghost grants a +2 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks for the duration of the challenge. Undoing the ritual requires 2 more successful Arcana checks which take 15 minutes each. Up to four characters can aid on these last two checks.

Bluff (DC 16, 6 successes): The hero negotiates with Omaphara under false pretenses. For every full 5 points by which the check succeeds, the hero earns an additional success.

Diplomacy (DC 16, 6 successes): The character deals fairly and genuinely with the ghost. For every full 5 points by which the check succeeds, the character earns an additional success.

History (DC 24, 2 successes): The adventurer searches his or her memory for events regarding the battle fought here in order to discuss those events knowledgeably with Omaphara. The first success reveals the War of the Pelt, and the second success reveals that the eladrin warrior must have died in the battle.

Insight (DC 16, 2 successes): The character senses that the ghost is held here against her will with the first success. The second reveals she is gripped by great sorrow.

Intimidate (DC 24, 6 successes): The character threatens or bullies the ghost. For every full 5 points

by which the check succeeds, the hero earns an additional success. Each failed check results in 2 failures. The first time this happens, tell the players that Omaphara gets very angry. If you can make them believe that she is about to withdraw back into her tomb, so much the better. She won't, but the players shouldn't know that.

Nature (DC 12, 1 success): The adventurer mentions or describes the threat against Silver Lake. A success by 5 or more grants the party a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks for the rest of the skill challenge.

Perception (DC 24, 1 success): The character notices a hidden entrance into the ghost's tomb. In addition to this knowledge, the character now has a bargaining chip and gains a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks for the duration of the skill challenge.

Stealth (DC 24, requires 1 success from Perception, 2 successes): The character sneaks into the tomb with the first success, fetches *Moonclaw* and sneaks out with a second success. A failed Stealth check results in automatic failure in the skill challenge and greatly angers Omaphara.

Special: If the adventurers visited the shrine in Silver Lake and translated the script, they automatically succeed on the first two History checks they attempt.

Secondary Skills: Endurance, Religion

Endurance (DC 12): When the adventurers earn their first 2 successes and again when they reach 4 successes, have each character participating in the challenge make an Endurance check. On a failure, that hero takes a –2 penalty to skill checks related to the challenge because of the ghost's intimidating presence.

Religion (DC 16): A character can make a Religion check in place of an Arcana check to undo the binding ritual holding the ghost here.

Success: Omaphara stands down, her features and dread presence softening. The ghost imparts the following information.

- She summarizes the War of the Pelt as described in the adventure background.
- She reveals the existence of the fey crossing on Wolfheart Isle and its use by the werebeasts.
- She explains that she fought the werebeasts when she lived, giving her life to driving the foul monsters from the Feywild. She died here, in a bloody battle against a powerful werewolf lord. Her lover Querelian interred her in the barrow and vowed he would make the werebeasts pay for her death. She believes he bound her to this site to ensure she would witness his revenge.
- Querelian visits her grave each year on the anniversary of her death to pay respects and renew his vow of vengeance. This year, he explained that her release is imminent and that the time for war had come again. She is sure he's behind the recent troubles even if she's uncertain what exactly he intends.
- The long years spent here have given her time to reflect on the war. Though she still believes it was justified, she also believes renewing the war will bring only tragedy. She would avert further bloodshed and asks the characters to convince Querelian to set aside his ambition. She suspects the eladrin prince is not alone in his bloodlust and that there must be werebeasts eager to resume the struggle.
- To aid the characters, Omaphara gives the heroes 30 silvered arrows, a ritual scroll of Fey Passage (*Manual of the Planes*, page 150) and her prized longsword, *Moonclaw*.

Moonclaw **Level 9 Rare**

The longsword's silvery blade bears runic engravings, oaths of vengeance against werebeasts and other shapechangers.

Weapon (Longsword) 4,200 gp
Enhancement: +2 attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 per plus, or +1d12 against shapechangers.
Property: This weapon is silvered.
Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to all defenses against attacks made by shapechangers.
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with a melee attack using this weapon. *Effect:* The target is dazed and cannot use powers that have the polymorph keyword (save ends both).

QUEST: STOP QUERELIAN

6th-Level Major Quest (1,250 XP)
The characters complete this quest when they persuade Querelian to stop his efforts to renew the War of the Pelt or defeat him in combat.

Failure: Omaphara becomes enraged and gains a surprise round, which she uses to utter a *terrifying shriek* (see below). Then call for initiative checks. Omaphara presses her attack ferociously, fighting to drive off the heroes. If any creatures were left from Encounter 3, they return on the 3rd round, each having regained one-fourth of their hit points. Although the characters might face only Omaphara, she is 6 levels above the adventurers, and her defenses combined with insubstantial should make her a threat. Only her mad laughter pursues fleeing characters.

If the characters defeat Omaphara and find the entrance to the tomb (DC 24 Perception check

required), they find *Moonclaw*, the scroll, and the silvered arrows mentioned above. Omaphara's ghost reforms 24 hours later. Should she find her tomb plundered, the characters may have gained an enemy for life with whatever consequences you choose.

Wailing Ghost (Banshee)		**Level 12 Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 700
HP 91; **Bloodied** 45		**Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24		**Perception** +13
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing		Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial		
Standard Actions		
ⓘ **Spirit Touch** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d8 +11 necrotic damage.		
Death's Visage (fear, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**		
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +15 vs. Will		
Hit: 1d8 + 12 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).		
Terrifying Shriek (fear, psychic) ✦ **Recharge 5 6**		
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +15 vs. Will		
Hit: 2d8 + 3 psychic damage, the banshee pushes the target up to 5 squares, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Skills Stealth +13		
Str 14 (+8)	**Dex** 15 (+8)	**Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 13 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+6)	**Cha** 17 (+9)
Alignment unaligned	**Languages** Common	

Encounter 3: Barrow Guardians

Encounter Level 7 (1,550 XP)

Setup

Pohr the Piper (P)
1 gremlin deceiver (D)
1 gremlin skulker (S)
2 wood woads (W)

Pohr and the wood woads start in the woods. The gremlins hide behind the boulders. They watch the heroes approach and start to snoop around before coming out to drive them off.

When the satyr and woads emerge, read:
A faint piping fills the air, its musical notes haunting and eerily familiar. The music comes from a horned human who steps out from behind the tree on goat legs. He pauses in his music to cock his horned head and grin at you. As he does, two creatures step out from the trees to join him. These are monstrous beings, seeming to be more tree than humanoid.

When the characters notice a gremlin, read:
A short, blue-skinned faerie with large pointed ears shows you a yellow grin, then makes a rude gesture with one outstretched hand.

Perception Check
DC 13 The character notices movement in the trees.
DC 19 The character notices the gremlin deceiver hiding behind the rocks.
DC 22 The character notices the gremlin skulker hiding behind the rocks.
DC 23 The character notices the satyr in the woods.

Undetected enemies have surprise against the characters.

Pohr the Piper (P)	**Level 8 Controller (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, satyr	XP 350
HP 86; **Bloodied** 43	**Initiative** +8
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21	**Perception** +10
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Gore ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Longbow (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage.	
Dazing Melody (charm) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Close burst 5 (non-deafened enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is dazed until the end of the piper's next turn.	
Minor Actions	
Feral Overture ✦ Encounter	
Effect: Close burst 5 (non-deafened allies in the burst). The target gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the piper's next turn.	
Leaping Stag Dance ✦ Encounter	
Effect: Close burst 5 (non-deafened allies in the burst). The target can shift 2 squares as a free action.	
Song of Freedom ✦ Encounter	
Effect: Close burst 5 (non-deafened allies in the burst). The target makes a saving throw against one effect that a saving throw can end.	
Skills Bluff +14, Nature +10, Stealth +13	
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+5)	
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+9)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Elven	
Equipment longbow, quiver of 30 arrows, wooden pipes	

Gremlin Deceiver (D)	**Level 5 Controller**
Small fey humanoid	XP 200
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31	**Initiative** +4
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17	**Perception** +10
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Sabotaging Presence ✦ Aura 5	
Enemies within the aura take a -5 penalty to skill checks.	
Standard Actions	
Claw ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.	
Befuddling Burst (charm, psychic) **✦ Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +8 vs. Will	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target cannot shift or stand up (save ends).	
Miss: The target cannot shift or stand up until the end of its next turn.	
Minor Actions	
Slip Up ✦ At-Will (1/round)	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. Will	
Hit: The target falls prone.	
Triggered Actions	
Gremlin Tactics ✦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the deceiver misses it with a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The deceiver swaps positions with the triggering enemy.	
Skills Bluff +8, Stealth +9, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+5)	
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 18 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+3)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin	

Gremlin Skulker (S)	**Level 7 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid	XP 300
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32	**Initiative** +11
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 18	**Perception** +6
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
☼ **Sabotaging Presence** ✦ **Aura** 5	
Enemies within the aura take a -5 penalty to skill checks.	
Shadow Sneak (illusion)	
While adjacent to an enemy, the skulker is invisible.	
Opportunistic Advantage	
The skulker deals 2d6 extra damage with opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage. If the target moves away from the skulker before the end of its next turn, the target falls prone at the end of its move.	
Triggered Actions	
Gremlin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the skulker misses it with a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The skulker swaps positions with the triggering enemy.	
Shadow Skulk ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the skulker moves.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The skulker shifts 6 squares, moving with the triggering enemy as it completes the move. The skulker remains adjacent to the enemy during the move and must end the shift adjacent to the enemy.	
Skills Stealth +12, Thievery +12	
Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 17 (+6)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 16 (+6) **Cha** 14 (+5)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin	

2 Wood Woads (W)	**Level 8 Soldier**
Medium fey humanoid (plant)	XP 350 each
HP 92; **Bloodied** 46	**Initiative** +5
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 21	**Perception** +12
Speed 5	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 8 damage.	
⸸ **Nature's Judgment** (healing) ✦ **Recharge 6**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both). When the target takes the ongoing damage, the fey enemy or plant enemy nearest to the target regains an equal number of hit points.	
Miss: The wood woad recharges *nature's judgment*.	
Minor Actions	
✧ **Nature's Mystery** (charm) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: Close burst 2 (one creature in the burst). The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls, all defenses, and saving throws (save ends). In addition, the target takes a -5 penalty to saving throws against this effect unless it succeeds on a DC 20 Nature check (a minor action).	
Skills Intimidate +11	
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 9 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+7)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment small wooden shield, club	

Tactics

The fey band wants to drive off the adventurers, thinking they intend to plunder the tomb. The wood woads surge forward and use *club* on their first turn. Once engaged, they use *nature's mystery* followed by *nature's judgment*. The woads fight to protect the satyr and may withdraw from one opponent to help their leader.

The satyr, meanwhile, hangs back, keeping within 3 to 5 squares of his woad allies. The satyr doesn't use *gore* or *longbow* unless directly attacked and then uses *longbow* until it can be certain to catch at least two or more enemies with *dazing melody*. Instead, the satyr hangs back and supports the woads using *feral overture*. Should an enemy make a melee attack against the satyr, it switches tactics, shifting toward the woads and then using *leaping stag dance* to cover its retreat.

The gremlins are here to cause trouble. Both gremlins stay within 5 squares of any enemy suffering from *nature's mystery* to thwart Nature checks made to lift the penalty to saving throws. The deceiver opens with *befuddling burst* and follows that with *slip up* against any target it hit with the attack. It uses *slip up* each round to pin enemies on the ground, then uses *claw* to shift away and get a clear shot.

The skulker moves from enemy to enemy until it gets ino position to cause trouble for ranged strikers and controllers. Remember, it is invisible while adjacent to an enemy and gains a big boost to damage on opportunity attacks. It exploits those advantages to the maximum possible extent.

While the satyr remains, the gremlins and woads fight to the death. The satyr isn't so careless with its life; once Pohr drops to 20 or fewer hit points, he turns all his effort to escaping alive. Absent the satyr,

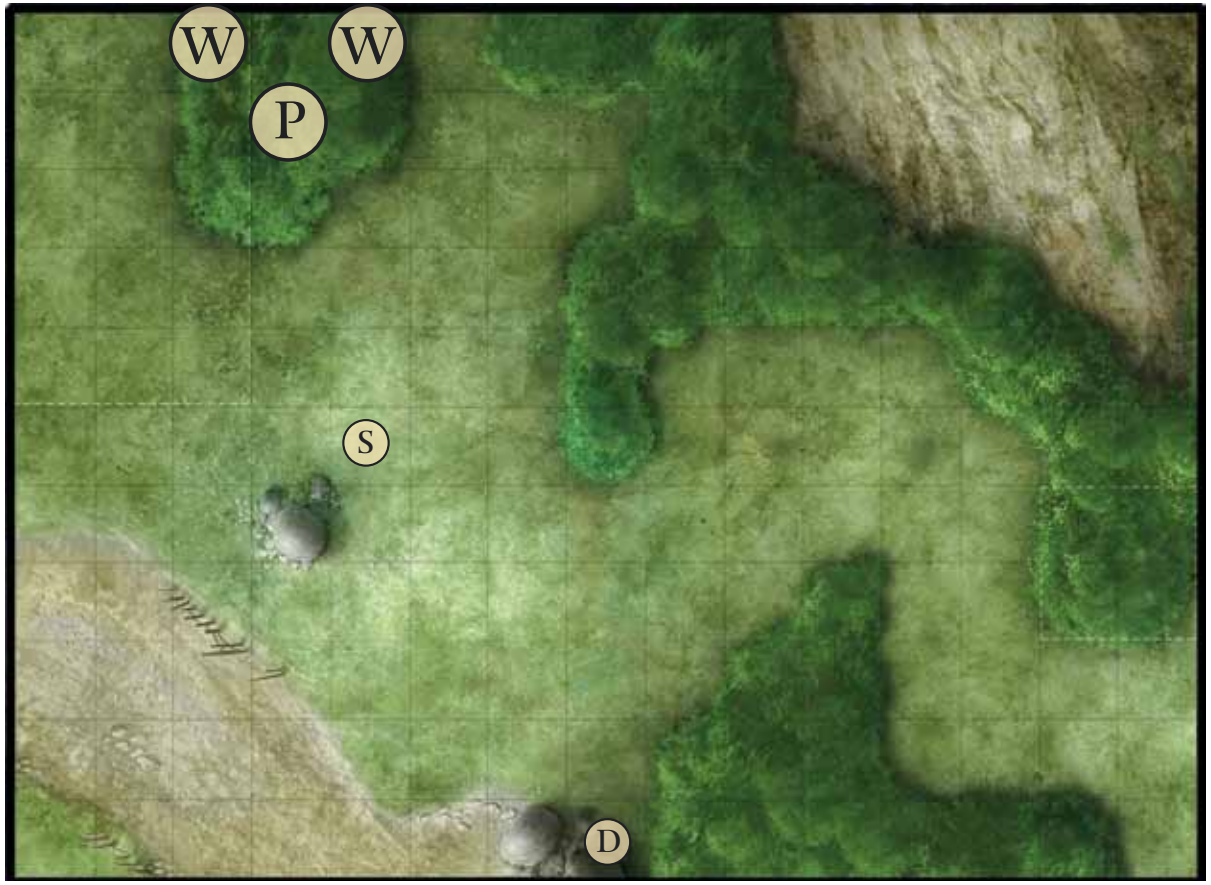
a gremlin flees when the other gremlin drops. A woad withdraws if the other woad drops to 0 hit points and it has 20 or fewer hit points.

Features of the Area

Boulders: Squares containing rocks grant partial cover to Medium creatures and superior cover to Small or smaller creatures. These squares are also difficult terrain.

Trees: The trees behind the hill are difficult terrain and grant partial concealment to creatures occupying these squares.

Treasure: The satyr has a pouch containing 39 gp.



Part Four: Wolfheart Isle

The foreboding isle at Silver Lake's center deserves its grim reputation. Hidden by mist and overgrown by trees and brambles, it looks much like a place untouched by civilization. The rubble littering the island tells a different tale and hints at a time when Wolfheart was tamed and occupied.

The most important facet of the island is its proximity to the Feywild. This is a place where the bright realm's influence can be strongly felt, where colors seem brighter, sounds louder, and life more abundant. The unusual nature stems from an infrequent planar convergence that occurs when the moon is full or nearly so. Almost the entire island is a fey crossing—a place where it's possible to move from the natural world to the Feywild and back again. This is the essential nature of any fey crossing, but most require the casting of the Fey Passage ritual (*Manual of the Planes*, page 150) in order to activate. Only a few activate on their own to whisk creatures from one side to the other. In Wolfheart Isle's case, the crossing becomes active during the nights when the moon is full. Thus, when Regina and company landed on the isle, they unknowingly slipped through to Brokenstone Vale, the Feywild location that partly corresponds with the island. The same opening also allowed the werebeasts to escape the Vale and launch their opportunistic predations against the people of Silver Lake.

Reaching the Island

Based on information gained previously, the island should attract the heroes as a key element in the mystery. The island lies about three-quarters of a mile from shore. The characters have a few options for getting there.

They can requisition any of the boats at the village dock. The trip would normally take 30 minutes, but thanks to the mist, a character must make a DC 23 Perception check every 10 minutes. Up to four characters can aid this check. A hero trained in Nature gains a +2 bonus to this check. On a success, the boat makes normal progress toward the island. On a failure, the adventurers get turned around and make no progress toward the island. A few rituals can speed this trip. Dowsing Rod (*Primal Power*, page 157), Summon Winds (*Eberron Player's Guide*, page 119), Find the Path (*Eberron Player's Guide*, page 117), or Call Wilderness Guide (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 213) can all eliminate the need for making Perception checks.

Another way to reach the island is by the crumbling causeway sunken beneath the lake's surface. It stretches from the island across the lake until it ends within wading distance of the shore. Characters may have discovered this route during Part Two, either by following up on clues gained at the Merry Face or by witnessing the werebeasts seeming to race across the water in the opening moments of Encounter 2. The characters can also discover the causeway's existence from the Speak with Nature or Commune with Nature rituals, which might also reveal the fey crossing's existence. Crossing via the causeway requires wading through knee-deep water (to a Medium creature) the whole way. The causeway is slippery, crumbling, and is lashed by waves along most of its length. Describe these dangers in lurid detail, but they are more apparent than real. Have each character make a DC 15 Endurance check during the trek; on a failure, the character loses a healing surge. This crossing also takes about 30 minutes, with no chance to become disoriented in the fog.

Crossing the lake to the island should be a challenge, not a barrier. Give due consideration to any plan the characters put forward. Multiple uses of Water Walk could have the same effect as following the hidden path, while flight might put the characters on the island faster, though they would still need to make Perception checks to navigate through the mists.

When the characters reach the island, read the following aloud:

You find yourselves on a shore littered with slime-coated stones and broken statuary. A thick forest awaits just a dozen paces from the water's edge. The trees grow so close together that they appear almost as a solid, log wall.

You also notice a sallow head spitted on a wooden stake. Insects have made short work of its eyes. A blackened tongue hangs from between its lips.

The head belonged to Tomas Tress. The werebeasts placed it here as a warning of what awaits trespassers. If Regina is present, she collapses when she recognizes her husband's features. She is inconsolable for several minutes. For the duration of the adventure, Regina seeks vengeance against the lycanthropes. Her attitude imposes a –2 penalty to Bluff and Diplomacy checks if she is present during negotiations with lycanthropes.

A Speak with Dead ritual can reveal the circumstances of Tomas's death. He was captured, tortured,

and finally executed. His captors and killers were wereboars.

Watchers in the Wood

The lycanthropes haunt these woods when not raiding the village, so if the heroes reach the island before 9 P.M., they might encounter the creatures described in Encounter 2. Use the map for Encounter 4 or some variation of it.

The werebeasts are not the only denizens on this island. Once the adventurers press into the forest, recently-emerged, wicked fey spring their trap. Proceed with **Encounter 4: Fey Ambush**.

Fey Crossing

The fey crossing becomes active at 6 P.M., awakened by the rising moon. It remains open while the full moon shines, closing again at 6 A.M. Any character moving more than 50 feet (10 squares) into the forest while the crossing is active enters the Feywild as described in Part 5. Characters can move freely between the planes for as long as the crossing remains open but must find some other way to cross the boundary when the crossing closes. There will be one more night of full moon after the attack on Silver Lake, in case the characters don't make it back to the fey crossing before it closes after they deal with Querelian.

Encounter 4: Fey Ambush

Encounter Level 5 (1,200 XP)

Setup

1 doomspinner spider (S)
3 spriggan powries (P)

The spriggans and their pet spider hunt for slaves. Wait to place the webs until the spiders attack or are detected.

When the characters reach the clearing, read:
You come to a clearing. Trees have been knocked down, underbrush uprooted.

Perception Check
DC 16: The character sees a big, green spider lurking in the branches overhead.
DC 22: The character spots the web sheets.
DC 24: The character spots the hidden powries.

Doomspinner Spider (S)	**Level 7 Controller**
Medium fey beast (spider)	XP 300
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40	**Initiative** +6
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18	**Perception** +5
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	Tremorsense 5
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Each Failed Saving Throw: The spider slides the target 3 squares.	
✧ **Poison Spittle** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +10 vs. Will	
Hit: Ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
Each Failed Saving Throw: The spider slides the target 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Fey Leap (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Trigger: An enemy hits the spider with a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The spider teleports 3 squares.	
Skills Acrobatics +11	
Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 7 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

3 Spriggan Powries (P)	**Level 7 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid	XP 300 each
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39	**Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +9
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Combat Reflexes	
The powrie gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Blood Slide	
The powrie does not provoke opportunity attacks for moving out of a square adjacent to a bloodied creature or a creature that is taking ongoing damage.	
Combat Advantage	
When a powrie hits a creature that is taking ongoing damage and is granting combat advantage to the powrie, the powrie's attack increases the ongoing damage by 5.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Sickle** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
⸸ **Hamstring** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge when first bloodied**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone, is slowed until the end of the spriggan's next turn, and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
⸸ **Punt the Fallen** ✦ **At-Will (1/round)**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one prone creature); +12 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and the spriggan pushes the target up to 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Redcap Zeal ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The powrie bloodies an enemy or drops an enemy to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): The powrie gains 1d8 + 2 temporary hit points.	
Skills Athletics +11, Stealth +14, Thievery +12	
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 15 (+5)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Elven	
Equipment leather armor, 2 sickles, iron-shod boots	

Tactics

Two powries use *hamstring*, while the third uses *sickle* to exploit combat advantage. The spriggans use *punt the fallen* as often as they can. The spider climbs down the trees to use *poison spittle* to catch as many adventurers as it can. It then resorts to *bite* until it can attack two or more enemies with *poison spittle* again.

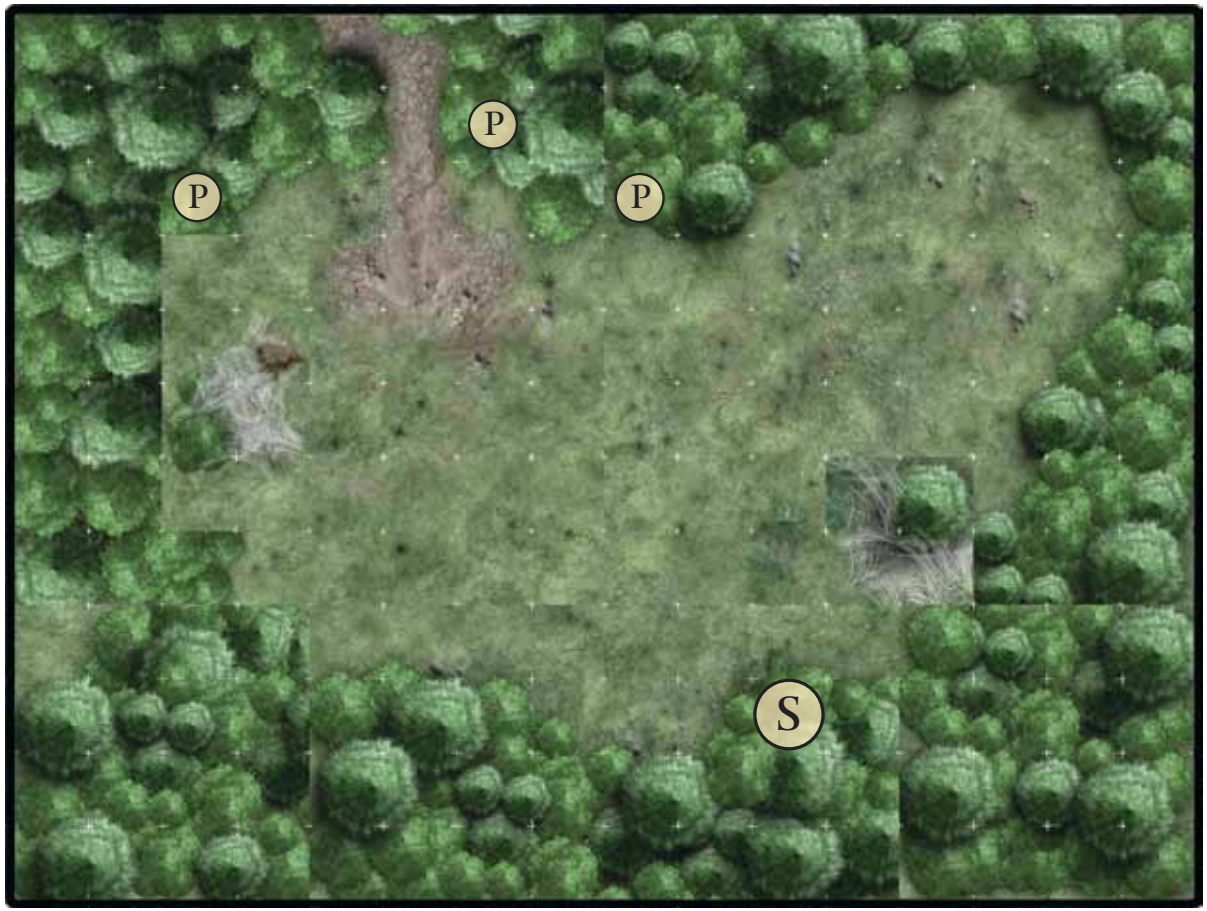
Features of the Area

Treasure: One spriggan carries a *potion of healing*.

Trees: The trees grant cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 10 Athletics check.

Web Sheets: The spider created web sheets where indicated on the map. A close or area fire attack destroys the webs, and a melee fire attack can destroy 1 square of the sheet.

Ⓘ Web Sheet ✦ At-Will
Trigger: A creature enters the web's space.
Attack: Melee 1 (triggering creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is immobilized (save ends).



Part Five: Brokenstone Vale

The beauty and wonder for which the Feywild is known masks a land infested with savage lycanthropes, a region best avoided and almost entirely unexplored. The mountain pass named Brokenstone Vale stretches between two rugged peaks; their dark stone is just visible through the fir and pine trees clinging to the upper slopes. Sparkling waterfalls spill out from the cracks, fed by snowmelt from the peaks lost in the high clouds snagged on their tips. This water gathers into pools and streams across the forest floor, following the contours eastward before joining the wide and sluggish Sorrowful River as it makes its way south. Few can say what lies beyond the pass, for Brokenstone Vale is a place few travelers willingly traverse.

In accordance with the ancient compact between the lycanthropes and the Court of Stars, the werebeasts are not troubled, provided they do not cross the Sorrowful River. There have been crossings, but those werebeasts who tried have generally found swift death by the Maiden of the Moon or her dedicated followers. Such endings are deemed justified by those who deliver them; lycanthropes who invade eladrin land are interlopers with bloodstained claws and fangs. They deserve death.

Of course, the werebeasts that were involved in the storied War of the Pelt are all bones and dust now. To many in the current generation of lycanthropes, Brokenstone Vale feels like a wildlife preserve, and they chafe at their confinement. In ancient days, werebeasts raised fortresses across the Vale and carved the land into petty kingdoms, with loyalties gained through threat and violence. Isolation has cut deeply into the shapeshifters. One by one their castles crumbled and their societies withered so that now, most lycanthropes here are little better than the feral beasts they resemble.

Entering the Vale

Crossing from the natural world into the Feywild is not a subtle experience; most travelers will notice the change. Not only does one see different and strange surroundings, but there is also a change to the spirit, a sudden health and vitality. Breath comes easier, sight becomes clearer, smells sharpen, hairs stand on end. The transition itself is not unpleasant, but the experience can be disconcerting and even frightening with the sudden realization of just how far you are from home and how difficult it might be to go back.

When the characters enter the Feywild, read:
It is as if the world tipped on its side for a moment and then reoriented itself. The sky stretches overhead, but the stars are not your stars, the moon is not your moon. They are brighter and larger, like shining lamps set in a dark sweep of astral dust that stretches from horizon to horizon. The clinging mist is gone, as is the lake's smell. The forest seems thinner; the trees are huddled together in groves. Behind you runs a wide river with a stone bridge spanning its width. Ahead are mountains—great, looming peaks whose caps vanish in the clouds.

If the heroes were not aware of the fey crossing's existence, a DC 15 Arcana check is sufficient to identify that they have crossed from the natural world into the Feywild. An eladrin character gains a +5 bonus to this check. While the crossing is active, a DC 11 Arcana check reveals the point where the characters can return to Wolfheart Isle.

Expanding the Adventure

Although just three locations are described in this adventure, Brokenstone Vale is brimming with adventure hooks and sites waiting to be explored. Lycanthrope bands jockey for dominance in the deep forests, while the ruins speckling the countryside offer fabulous treasure and commensurate danger. Furthermore, the many caves dimpling the mountainsides lead into the Feydark, where strange monsters prowl and mad fomorian kings govern with whimsy and caprice. As well, Mithrendain is but a few leagues away. You can add side treks, additional encounters, and further complications to enrich the adventure and tailor it to your players' interests and personal quests.

Shatterstone

Shatterstone is the closest thing Brokenstone Vale has to civilization. This tiny village ruled by the iron-fisted Viktor Mazan serves as a trading post for the infrequent merchants who have bid farewell to common sense in order to seek customers in this dangerous land. Shatterstone is a squalid community, just a handful of crude huts built against the Sorrowful River's bank. A wooden bridge spans the water.

To an outsider, the villagers appear to be dirty, wild-eyed humans. Mazan has forbidden his people from adopting bestial or hybrid forms while within the community, to make visiting merchants feel more comfortable. This prohibition does not sit well with the villagers, who resent hiding their nature. They put up with this restriction because clothing, food, spices,

and other necessities are not available elsewhere in the Vale.

The village is only a few hundred feet upriver from where the characters enter the Feywild. They need only follow the wide path alongside the water to reach the community. What's happening in Shatterstone when the adventurers arrive depends on when they arrive.

Viktor Mazan

Shatterstone's leader is a graying werewolf lord named Viktor Mazan. He is the last descendant of a long line of lycanthrope warrior chiefs. Mazan grew troubled by the Vale's rapid slide into barbarism. His people had forgotten the great things their ancestors achieved when they first came to the Feywild and what this homeland meant to them as a race. To combat the savagery, Mazan established Shatterstone at the Vale's edge. He hoped to establish trade with neighboring lands by offering rare varieties of wood in exchange for finished material such as textiles and other needed commodities. Some now claim that Mazan is ashamed of his lycanthropy, though never to his face. In fact, Mazan is proud of his heritage, but he also realizes that without a firm hand to guide them and keep their destructive urges in check, his people will slide back to barbarism and disaster.

Viktor Mazan **Level 10 Elite Brute (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human, werewolf — XP 1,000

HP 252; **Bloodied** 126 — **Initiative** +6
AC 22, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21 — **Perception** +12
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) — Low-light vision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Blood Moon ✦ Aura 5
Allies within the aura gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +5 bonus to damage rolls against bloodied targets.

Regeneration
Viktor regains 5 hit points whenever he starts his turn and has at least 1 hit point. When he takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration does not function on his next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: Viktor must be in dire wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC, or +17 against a bloodied target
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage, or 2d10 + 10 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Bite (keywords) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: Viktor must be in dire wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC, or +17 against a bloodied target
Hit: 1d12 + 10 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts greater werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Greatsword (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: Viktor must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC, or +17 against a bloodied target.
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, or 2d10 + 11 against a bloodied target.

Lycanthrope Wrath ✦ At-Will
Requirement: Viktor must be in hybrid form.
Effect: Viktor makes two melee basic attacks. Then Viktor takes 5 damage.

Speed of the Wolf ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⚅
Requirement: Viktor must be in dire wolf form.
Effect: Viktor can shift up to 6 squares and then use *bite*.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: Viktor alters his physical form to appear as a unique human, a Large dire wolf, or a Large hybrid. If he assumes Large size from Medium size, he pushes each creature adjacent to him 1 square. He remains in this form until he uses *change shape* again or until he drops to 0 hit points.

Savage Howl ✦ Encounter
Effect: Close burst 10 (allies in the burst). The target gains 10 temporary hit points. Then, if the target has *bite*, it can use *bite* as a free action.

Triggered Actions

Ferocious Rebuke ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An adjacent enemy hits Viktor with a melee attack using a melee weapon.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Viktor makes a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Skills Athletics +15, Bluff +13, Endurance +13, Intimidate +13

Str 21 (+10)	**Dex** 12 (+6)	**Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 16 (+8)	**Int** 14 (+7)	**Cha** 17 (+8)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common
Equipment hide armor, greatsword

Greater Werewolf Moon Frenzy — Level 10 Disease

This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a –2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
12 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
13–17: No change.
18 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

If Characters Arrive Before Midnight:

The village is secure, Viktor Mazan is still present, and the characters find a cool welcome when they arrive.

When the characters reach the village, read:
Several crude huts cling to the riverside, flanked by the water and a muddy path that is blocked in places by stacked lumber, burlap bags, and a few crates. A few sullen humans watch as you approach. Suspicion and anger are evident in their stares.

All of the villagers are lycanthropes. They remain in human form so their true nature is not immediately evident. Not long after the heroes arrive, Mazan steps out onto the street to see what's afoot.

When you're ready, read:
A great, burly man dressed in animal hides steps out from a hut. His eyes gleam golden in the moonlight. "An odd hour to visit, but welcome to Shatterstone all the same. What business have you with my humble people?"

Provided the characters give him a satisfactory answer, he invites them into his hut, where an old, battered lantern fills the small room with soft light. He takes a wooden stool and offers spots on the hides to the characters. Mazan doesn't reveal right away that he's a werewolf. Instead, he waits for the characters to explain themselves and their purpose. He is slow to take offense at disparaging comments about werebeasts, preferring not to invite trouble onto his head. Play Mazan as fierce but patient, intimidating yet tolerant. Mazan knows the following information.

- Mazan knows about the fey crossing and when it opens. He prefers to keep its existence secret from inhabitants on both sides to avoid more conflict with the people at Silver Lake.
- Mazan can identify the necklaces of teeth and knows who the Jagged Fangs are. He explains they are a renegade tribe, a barbaric and warlike band intent on resuming the war with the eladrin. Mazan also knows the area where they lair and can supply the adventurers with directions. The lair is about 10 miles away (see "Timing, Traveling, and Troubleshooting").
- Mazan can fill in gaps in the characters' knowledge about the War of the Pelt. He's particularly keen to educate people on this subject.
- Mazan has heard reports about unrest from all across the Vale, and word has reached him that many clans are eager for war. He understands the anger but not how quickly it has spread nor its intensity. He suspects there's someone behind this newfound aggression and would like that someone stopped.

Story Award: Award 250 XP to the group for getting this information from Viktor Mazan.

Troubleshooting

A lot can go wrong here. The heroes might skip over Shatterstone, attack the werewolves, or completely bungle the opportunity to gain information and cooperation from Mazan.

Skipping Shatterstone: If the characters head into the wilderness instead of the village, let them. They might stumble into the Jagged Fangs, other lycanthropes, or some other fey monster. Look to "Additional Encounters." Be sure to track the time that the characters spend and check it against the adventure's timeline.

Attack the Village: If the characters attack Shatterstone, they're in for a fight. Ten werewolves and Viktor Mazan fight back. The lycanthropes will subdue the characters rather than kill them. Prisoners awaken in Mazan's presence, and events will unfold from there more or less as described above, only with a lot less friendliness and trust from Mazan.

QUEST: UNMASK THE AGITATORS
6th-Level Minor Quest (250 XP)
The heroes complete this quest when they identify the gnomes working from within the Jagged Fangs, expose them as agents, or destroy them.

If Characters Arrive at Midnight:

If the characters haven't already confronted the Jagged Fangs clan, Shatterstone comes under attack at midnight. The renegades strike at the villagers to create a distraction so their assassins can drug Mazan and drag him back to their lair. Proceed with **Encounter 5: The Jaws Close**.

Development: Unless the characters persuade Mazan to leave the village or they stay by his side for the duration of the encounter, his abduction happens off-screen and is discovered after the battle ends. Even if they begin the encounter near Mazan, he will

rush off to join the fighting elsewhere unless they take steps to prevent him (or follow him). If they stick close to Mazan, their presence can keep the kidnappers from making their move. Whether the kidnappers try later is up to you.

QUEST: RESCUE MAZAN
6th-Level Major Quest (1,250 XP)
The characters complete this quest when they free Viktor Mazan from the Jagged Fangs. If Viktor is slain and the characters find the body, they can still complete this quest if they arrange for him to be raised.

If Characters Arrive After Midnight:

If the adventurers aren't present when the attack comes, they find the village sacked and bodies littering the ground. The survivors are belligerent. A DC 15 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check gets them to reveal what happened and who was responsible—the Jagged Fangs. These remaining villagers are angry and ready to kill, and the characters will make fine targets if they act aggressively or try to push anyone around. After 3 A.M., if the heroes have not yet rescued Mazan, the village is deserted; all the survivors have joined up with the mustering hoard preparing to invade the eladrin land.

Whenever the characters arrive, a DC 15 Perception check is required to find tracks left by the attackers. A second check against the same DC is needed to follow the tracks to the Jagged Fangs' lair, which is about 10 miles away (see "Timing, Traveling, and Troubleshooting").

The Jagged Fangs dump Mazan's corpse near Shatterstone at around 3 A.M. Let the characters discover the body if they're in the area; otherwise, lycanthropes find it.

THE TICKING CLOCK

Several events occur at specific times in Brokenstone Vale. Tensions have been rising since well before the characters reach this place, so the characters have but once chance to put things aright before war begins anew. The characters have several opportunities to upset the adventure's timeline. Adjust the events in accordance with the adventurers' actions. Even if they save Mazan's life and disrupt the Jagged Fangs this time, Querelian will just try something else later. The threat can't truly be stopped until Querelian is dead or rendered incapable of causing trouble.

Jagged Fangs' Lair

The Jagged Fangs clan is a small lycanthrope band manipulated into serving Querelian's interests through the effort of two gnome agitators. The clan was larger in the past, but many were killed or scattered in the attack on Silver Lake and others are elsewhere in the Vale drumming up support to attack the eladrin communities across the river. The lair itself is a large cave extending deep into the mountain with an exterior camp just outside the entrance. Characters moving rapidly can travel from Shatterstone to the Jagged Fangs lair in about 2 hours.

If Viktor Mazan was captured and is still alive, the lycanthropes hold him inside the cavern.

Encampment

This area is a clearing near the cave mouth with a bonfire in the center. If the characters reach this location before 3 A.M., proceed with **Encounter 6: Jagged Fangs**. Otherwise, skip encounter 6.

Cave

From the entrance, the cave extends 80 feet before terminating in a series of smaller chambers where the clan leaders gather. If the characters reach this location before 3 A.M. and Mazan has been kidnapped, the werewolf lord is here and held in chains. Proceed with **Encounter 7: Unwitting Dupes**. If the characters reach this location after Mazan dies, skip encounter 7.

Development: Any lycanthrope prisoners offer little information that is of help. If the characters take a gnome prisoner, they can get him talking with a DC 16 Intimidate check. The gnome reveals that he works for Querelian, exposes the plan to rouse up the lycanthropes to fight against the eladrin, and tells where Querelian can be found. A roll of 21 or higher also reveals that Querelian plans to dispatch ravens to call for reinforcement from Mithrendain.

Mazan Freed

Once Viktor Mazan is freed, he heads off to persuade the gathering werebeasts to stand down. He takes a gnome with him as proof of the plot. The adventure assumes he succeeds in undoing Querelian's efforts for now.

Troubleshooting

If the characters don't follow up on the Jagged Fangs and allow Mazan to die, the werebeasts assemble and get ready to invade the eladrin land. The adventurers can't do much to stop the invasion at this point, and the heroes may realize this fact and seek to escape. You can use skipped encounters to harry the characters as they head for the fey crossing or to trouble them while they remain in the Vale. At your option, you might let the characters address the gathered lycanthropes in the hope of halting their attack or

delaying it while they think up a more permanent solution. You could construct this as a high complexity skill challenge or as a series of encounters requiring the characters to gain support from different factions, defeat champions in personal combat, and so on. At that point, you've taken a completely different direction for the adventure, but this wrinkle could offer an interesting and challenging way to resolve the situation.

White Thorn

About a half-mile east from the Sorrowful River's shore stands a crumbling keep called the White Thorn. During the War of the Pelt, the tower served the eladrin as a strongpoint against the werebeast hordes. Since the war's end, it was abandoned and left to rot. Querelian orchestrates his plans from this base. White Thorn can be reached from Shatterstone in about 10 minutes if one knows the way. The distance between White Thorn and the Jagged Fangs' lair can be covered in 2 hours of hard travel (see "Timing, Traveling, and Troubleshooting").

After the characters deal with the gnomes in Encounter 7, they should know who's behind the plot and where he's hiding. The directions gained from the prisoners will lead the characters straight to White Thorn. Alternatively, the adventurers can learn the tower's location from werebeast allies in Shatterstone. Once the heroes cross the river, call for a group DC 17 Stealth check. If half the party succeeds, the characters approach the tower undetected and surprise the eladrin and his allies. If more than half the party fails, they find Querelian waiting for them.

When the characters reach the tower, read:

A ruined tower ringed by thick trees rises before you. Vines creep up the tower walls. Light from within shines through the rents in its outer walls.

Proceed with **Encounter 8: Battle for White Thorn**.

Timing, Traveling, and Troubleshooting

Timing is important in this phase of the adventure. The eladrin dispatches his messenger ravens just before dawn, when his spies report the hordes gathering on the Sorrowful River's bank. If the characters don't reach the tower before 6 A.M. and without saving Mazan, war is certain.

The distance between Shatterstone and the Jagged Fangs' lair is about 10 miles. From the Jagged Fangs' Lair to White Thorn is about the same distance—10 miles. Characters can cover those distances rapidly in a bit less than 2 hours, but the exertion will cost everyone a healing surge (per trip). Characters can save their healing surges by slowing down, but then each trip takes 3 hours, and time matters. (For more on travel times, see page 169 in *Rules Compendium*.)

The distance between Shatterstone and White Thorn is only about a half-mile. It can be covered in less than 10 minutes without losing a healing surge.

Encounter 5: The Jaws Close

Encounter Level 6 (1,400 XP)

Setup

7 werewolf scavengers (W)

The werewolf scavengers rush into the village intent on creating enough chaos to distract the inhabitants from Viktor Mazan's kidnapping.

When the creatures attack, read:

A pack of amber-eyed wolves stalk into the village. Hackles raised, their intent is clear.

Werewolf Moon Frenzy — **Level 6 Disease**

This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a –2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11–14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Tactics

The werewolves work in teams of two or three. They lead with *bounding charge* and then press the attack using melee basic attacks. They stay in hybrid or wolf form.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The full moon provides dim light.

Huts: A creature can enter a hut. A creature can make attacks through the door and gains cover while positioned there.

Lumber, Materials, Debris: Squares containing these elements are difficult terrain.

7 Werewolf Scavengers (W) — **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (shapeshifter), human — XP 200 each

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27 — **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +8
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, or 2d6 + 9 damage against a prone target, and the werewolf can slide the target 1 square.

Bite (disease) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Handaxe (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage, or 1d6 + 11 against a prone target.

Bounding Charge ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf charges and can make the following attack in place of a melee basic attack.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage, the target falls prone, and the werewolf shifts up to one-half its speed.

Triggered Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Str 18 (+6)	**Dex** 16 (+5)	**Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	**Int** 8 (+1)	**Cha** 10 (+2)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common
Equipment handaxe

Encounter 6: Jagged Fangs

Encounter Level 6 (1,300 XP)

Setup

1 howling hag (H)
1 wereboar (B)
1 dire boar (D)
2 frenzied werewolves (W)

The howling hag is a hanger-on tolerated by the werebeasts. She's feeding the dire boar while the wereboar, in hybrid form, sits and picks the last few morsels from a wererat's bones. The werewolves, also in hybrid form, recline on the ground.

Wereboar Moontusk Fever — Level 6 Disease

The raging fever burns away resilience and resolve.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws while bloodied.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target can roll only one saving throw at the end of its turn, even if it is affected by multiple effects.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target must roll two dice and use the lower result when rolling a saving throw while bloodied.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Wereboar (B) — **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 250

HP 76; **Bloodied** 38 — **Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17 — **Perception** +4
Speed 6 (8 in boar form)

Traits

Regeneration
The wereboar regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the wereboar takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Bloodied Resilience
While bloodied, the wereboar gains a +2 bonus to all defenses.

Standard Actions

Gore (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wereboar must be in boar or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends) or ongoing 10 damage (save ends) if the wereboar is bloodied. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts wereboar moontusk fever (stage 1).

Maul (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wereboar must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wereboar alters its physical form to appear as a Medium boar, a unique human, or a hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Triggered Actions

Death Strike
Trigger: The wereboar drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The wereboar uses *gore* or *maul*.

Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +11, Intimidate +8
Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 10 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment hide armor, maul

Howling Hag (H) — **Level 7 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid — XP 300

HP 83; **Bloodied** 41 — **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +10
Speed 6 — Low-light vision
Resist 10 thunder

Traits

Baleful Whispers (psychic) ✦ **Aura** 5
Any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 1d6 psychic damage.

Standard Actions

Quarterstaff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage.

Howl (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +10 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 4 thunder damage, and the hag pushes the target up to 3 squares.

Shriek of Pain (thunder) ✦ **Recharge when the hag is first bloodied**
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +8 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + 4 thunder damage, or 3d6 + 9 thunder damage if the hag is bloodied
Miss: Half damage.

Move Actions

Fey Step (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The hag teleports up to 10 squares.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The hag can alter its physical form to appear as an old crone of any Medium humanoid race.

Skills Bluff +11, Insight +10, Intimidate +11, Nature +10
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 19 (+7) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment quarterstaff

2 Frenzied Werewolves (W) **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 250 each

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39 — **Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Bite (disease) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Club (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 9 against a bloodied target.

Lycanthrope Fury ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf uses *claw* and *bite*. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Dire Boar (D) **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural beast — XP 250

HP 85; **Bloodied** 42 — **Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +2
Speed 8

Traits

Furious Charge
Whenever a dire boar charges and hits, it deals 5 extra damage, pushes the target 2 squares, and knocks the target prone.

Standard Actions

Gore ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, or 2d10 + 9 against a prone target.

Triggered Actions

Rabid Charger (mount) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: The dire boar has a friendly rider of 6th level or higher mounted on it, and the rider hits with a charge attack.
Effect (Free Action): The dire boar uses *gore*.

Death Strike
Trigger: The dire boar drops to 0 hit points
Effect (No Action): The dire boar uses *gore*.

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 10 (+3) **Wis** 9 (+2)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 8 (+2)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Werewolf Moon Frenzy **Level 6 Disease**
This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Tactics

The howling hag moves or uses *fey step* to cover as many enemies as she can with *shriek of pain* and *baleful whispers*, and then uses *howl* on the following turns until bloodied, when she recharges *shriek of pain*. The hag flees when she is down to 20 hit points or fewer.

The wereboar stands up, moves to the dire boar, and mounts. It uses charge attack each round until it or the boar is dead.

The werewolves stand up and charge if possible. They remain in hybrid form to use *claw* and *bite*. The werewolf uses *lycanthrope fury* to infect as many enemies at it can. Thereafter, it uses *club* or *claw*.

Features of the Area

Bonfire: The bonfire sheds bright light out to 20 squares. The bonfire can also make the following attack.

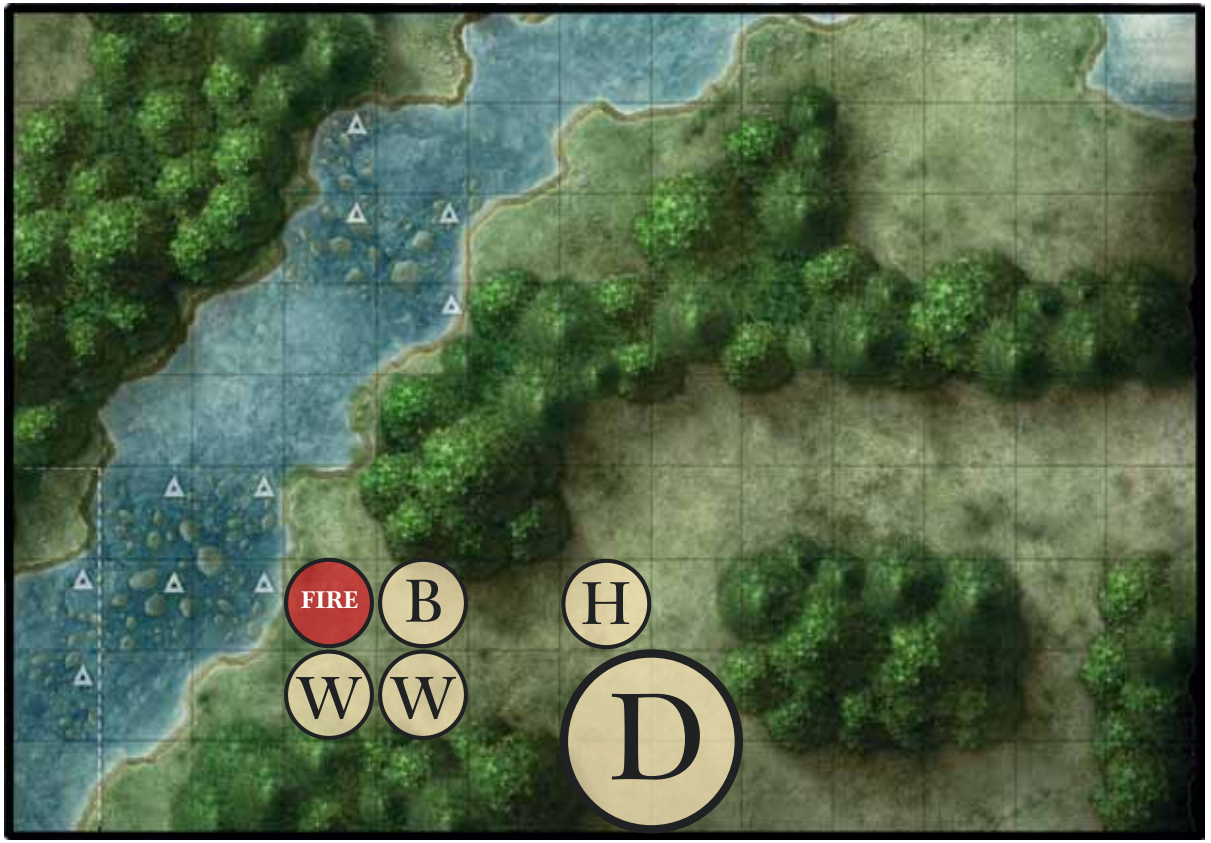
ǂ Bonfire (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A creature enters the bonfire's space.
Attack: Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 10 fire damage, and ongoing 3 fire damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Trees: The trees offer concealment and are difficult terrain.

Water: Any character knocked prone in a water square slides 1d4 squares toward the edge of the map. Rocks in the water count as difficult terrain.

Waterfall: Any character entering the waterfall's square must succeed on a DC 16 Endurance check or be knocked prone.

Treasure: The creatures here have two garnets (100 gp each) and a *potion of healing*.



Encounter 7: Unwitting Dupes

Encounter Level 8 (1,750 XP)

Setup

Akadala, the Yellow Fang (A)
1 gnome illusionist (I)
2 gnome spies (S)
4 feral wererats (R)

The wereserpent Akadala leads the Jagged Fangs clan from her hidden lair in the mountainside. A gnome illusionist disguised as a wererat advises her and goads her to take rash action. Her pet wererats scurry in the shadows while the two gnome spies haunt the darker corners, watching for trouble.

When the characters first see Akadala, read:
A woman dressed in animal hides surges out from the shadows, brandishing a rusting bastard sword. Her features contort with her fury, revealing something bestial behind her human façade.

Wereserpent Blood Rot — **Level 7 Disease**

The disease's victims experience excruciating pain when their blood turns to poison.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls. In addition, while bloodied, the target is weakened.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and is weakened. Whenever the target takes damage from an attack, it takes 10 extra poison damage.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
10-15: No change.
16 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1

Akadala, the Yellow Fang (A) — **Level 7 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 300

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35 — **Initiative** +9
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 4 (snake or hybrid form only) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
Akadala regains 5 hit points whenever she starts her turn and has at least 1 hit point. When Akadala takes damage from a silvered weapon, her regeneration does not function on her next turn.

Standard Actions

Bastard Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: Akadala must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Akadala's next turn.

Bite (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: Akadala must be in snake or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex, or +14 vs. Reflex if Akadala is grabbing the target.
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts wereserpent blood rot (stage 1).

Tail Grab ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: Akadala must be in snake or hybrid form and not be grabbing a creature.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 16).
Sustain Minor: The grab persists. The grabbed creature takes 10 damage and becomes dazed until the end of Akadala's next turn.
Miss: Half damage.

Move Actions

Drag Foe ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: Akadala must be in snake or hybrid form and grabbing a creature.
Effect: Akadala moves up to her speed and the creature she is grabbing moves with her, ending its movement in an unoccupied square adjacent to her.

Serpentine Shift ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: Akadala must not be slowed.
Effect: Akadala shifts up to 4 squares. Each ally within 10 squares of Akadala can shift up to 2 squares as a free action.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Akadala alters her physical form to appear as a snake, a Medium unique human, or a hybrid.

Triggered Actions

Swift Bite (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy Akadala has marked moves, shifts, or makes an attack that does not include her as a target.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is weakened and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both). Akadaka takes 5 damage.

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +13, Stealth +12

Str 22 (+9)	**Dex** 18 (+7)	**Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 20 (+8)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common
Equipment bastard sword

Gnome Illusionist (I) **Level 6 Artillery**
Small fey humanoid XP 250

HP 57; **Bloodied** 28 **Initiative** +5
AC 20, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 5 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Gnarled Staff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.

Bedazzle (illusion, radiant) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 5 radiant damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends).

See Me Not (illusion, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +9 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 10 psychic damage, and the target cannot see the gnome (save ends).

Move Actions

There, Not There (illusion, teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The gnome teleports up to 5 squares and creates two duplicates of itself within 5 squares of its destination space. The duplicates last until the gnome attacks or until they are destroyed. Each duplicate has 1 hit point and the same ability scores and defenses as the gnome. The gnome can use its actions to have a duplicate act in any way it could, except that the duplicate cannot use powers.

Minor Actions

Disguise Self (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The gnome can disguise itself to appear as any Small or Medium humanoid. A creature can see through the disguise with a successful Insight check opposed by the gnome's Bluff check.

Skills Bluff +13, Stealth +12
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 18 (+7) **Cha** 20 (+8)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment robes, gnarled staff (quarterstaff)

4 Feral Wererats (R) **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human XP 200 each

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27 **Initiative** +9
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 4 (rat or hybrid form only) Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The wererat regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the wererat takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 6 damage, or 4d4 + 6 if the wererat has combat advantage against the target.

Bite (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the wererat, it also takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends). At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts feral wererat filth fever (stage 1).

Move Actions

Rat Scurry ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat form.
Effect: The wererat shifts up to its speed.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wererat alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny rat, or a Medium unique human or hybrid.

Skills Bluff +8, Stealth +12
Str 11 (+2) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 14 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

Feral Wererat Filth Fever **Level 5 Disease**
Those infected by this disease waste away as they alternately suffer chills and hot flashes.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target loses a healing surge.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target loses a healing surge. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
9 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
10-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Tactics

Akadala becomes enraged when she learns intruders have breached her lair. She advances in human form and uses *bastard sword* to contain the enemies. Once she becomes bloodied, she switches to snake form and uses *tail grab*. She then uses *bite* to expose the adventurer to her disease. She fights to the death.

The wererats assume rat form and use *rat scurry* to get into position. When they flank an enemy, they use *bite* and then *change shape* into hybrid form to use *dagger*. The wererats fight to the death so long as Akadala lives. If she drops to 0 hit points, wererats flee when dropped to 10 or fewer hit points.

The gnomes are under orders to foment unrest and discord in Brokenstone Vale, and being so close to achieving their goals, they are not willing to abandon their task yet. So long as Akadala remains, the gnomes fight. The spies alternate between *vanish from sight* and *short sword* each round. Meanwhile, the illusionist opens with *bedazzle* to aid the wererats. The gnome switches to *see me not* or *there, not there* if enemies get close enough to make melee attacks. Should Adakala drop to 0 hit points, the gnomes flee.

2 Gnome Spies (S)	Level 5 Lurker
Small fey humanoid	XP 200 each
HP 51; **Bloodied** 25	**Initiative** +10
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17	**Perception** +8
Speed 5	Low-light vision

Traits

Reactive Stealth

If the gnome has cover or concealment when it rolls initiative, it can make a Stealth check to become hidden.

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, or 4d6 + 4 if the gnome was invisible to the target when it attacked.

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +10 vs. AC

Hit: 2d4 + 5 damage, or 4d4 + 5 if the gnome was invisible to the target when it attacked.

Vanish from Sight (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**

Effect: The gnome becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack or until the end of its next turn.

Triggered Actions

Fade Away (illusion) ✦ **Encounter**

Trigger: The gnome takes damage.

Effect (Immediate Reaction): The gnome becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack or until the end of its next turn.

Skills Bluff +10, Stealth +11

Str 10 (+2)	**Dex** 18 (+6)	**Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	**Int** 11 (+2)	**Cha** 17 (+5)

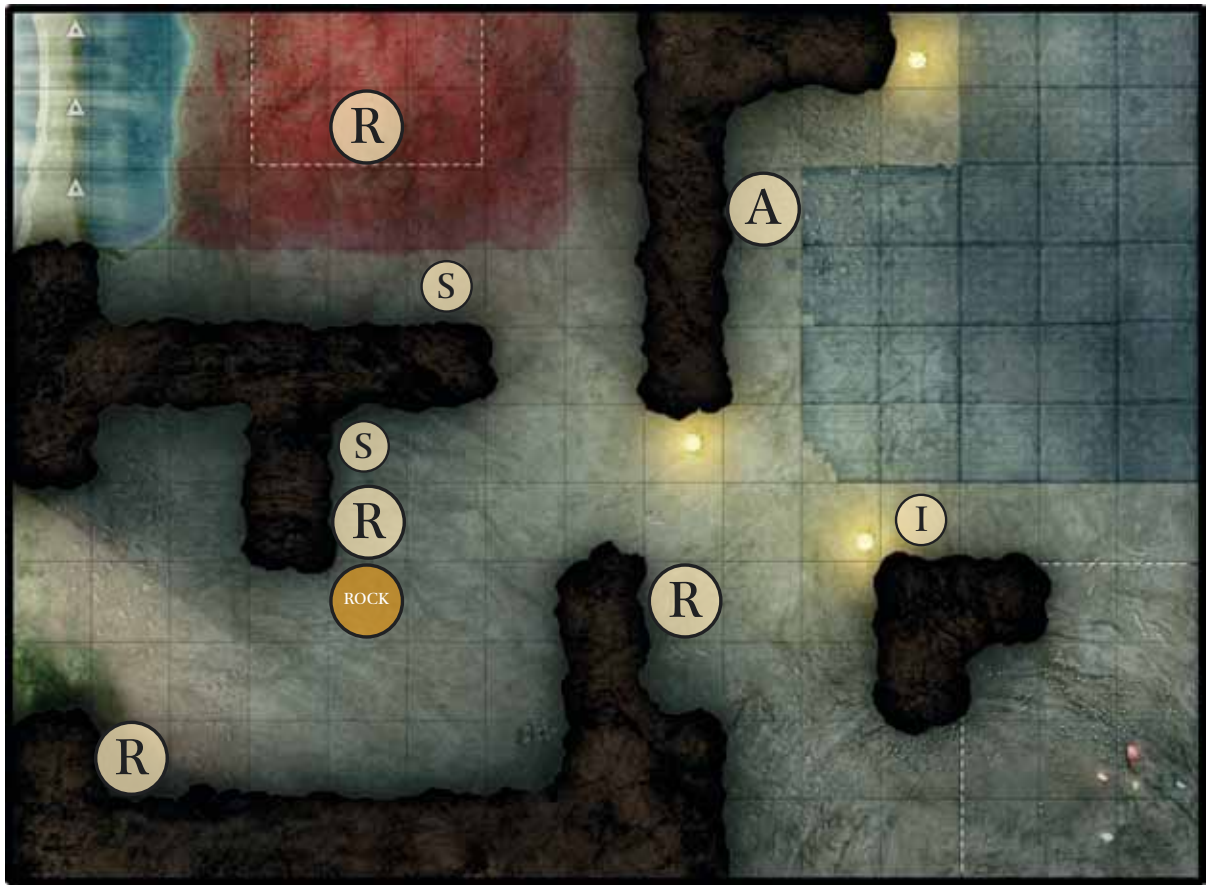
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven

Equipment leather armor, short sword, dagger

Features of the Area

Illumination: Torches in wall sconces fill the rooms with bright light.

Boulder: A boulder sits atop a slope. A hero can shove the boulder to send it rolling.



Boulder ✦ Single-Use Terrain

Requirement: A creature must be adjacent to the boulder.

Check: A DC 24 Athletics check is required to shove the rock.

Success: The boulder rolls forward and down the slope, stopping after moving 1d6 squares away from the slope's base. The boulder can move through a creature's space. When it does so, make the following attack.

Attack: Melee 1 (the creature whose space the boulder entered); +11 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.

Miss: Slide the target 1 square out of the boulder's path.

Cave Slime: Any creature that enters a square filled with cave slime must succeed on a DC 16 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Treasure: The characters find one level 7 uncommon item, two amethysts (100 gp each), a leather sack filled with 200 gp, and a chest holding 2,000 sp.

Encounter 8: Battle for White Thorn

Encounter Level 8 or 9 (1,850 or 2,050 XP)

Setup

Querelian (Q)
1 gnome assassin (A)
1 unkindness of ravens (R)
2 dryad hunters (D)
4 eladrin bow mages (M)

Querelian, the gnome, ravens, and bow mages are all inside the tower. The dryads are in the surrounding woods. If the characters arrive after 6 A.M., the ravens are gone, sent forth to carry warning to Mithrendain. Don't forget the characters may have surprise against the eladrin and his lackeys (see "Jagged Fangs Lair" above).

When the characters first see Querelian, read:
A handsome eladrin knight dressed in shining mail and wielding a slim longsword faces you. He would be the very picture of Feywild nobility if not for the madness darkening his eyes. He laughs when he sees you, and it is a shrill, jarring sound.

If the characters have ruined Querelian's plans, he screams and curses at them, using language too foul to print here. He also accuses them of being werebeasts, elf-foes, and (if there are any fey adventurers) traitors. Querelian reserves his most potent vitriol for a hero wielding *Moonclaw*, and he directs his attacks against that character. Once the eladrin becomes bloodied, all reason flees his mind. He starts barking and hooting, becoming akin to the very beasts he despises.

Querelian (Q) **Level 7 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid XP 600

HP 154; **Bloodied** 77 **Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17 **Perception** +4
Speed 5 Low-light vision
Saving Throws +2, +9 against charm effects; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Feywild Tactics ✦ Aura 10
Fey allies score critical hits on rolls of 19-20 while in the aura.

Standard Actions

Longsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage, it also falls prone.

Force Bolt (force, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +10 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 4 force damage.

Stab of the Wild (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 8 damage, and the target is restrained until the end of Querelian's next turn. If the target is granting combat advantage, it also falls prone.
Special: Querelian can use this power in place of an opportunity attack.

Mad Dance ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: Querelian shifts up to his speed and then uses *longsword*.

Befuddling Strike (charm, weapon) ✦ **Recharge on a miss**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is beguiled (save ends). While the target is beguiled, it makes an opportunity attack against any one of its allies that attacks Querelian.

Move Actions

Fey Step (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Querelian teleports up to 5 squares.

Minor Actions

Feywild Challenge (radiant) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Close burst 10 (one enemy in the burst). Querelian marks the target until the end of the encounter or until he uses this power again. While an enemy is marked by Querelian, it takes 4 radiant damage whenever it ends its turn without attacking Querelian.

Insane Resolve ✦ Recharge ⁞⁞
Effect: Querelian makes saving throws against each effect on him that a save can end.

Triggered Actions

Harvest's Sorrow ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An attack damages an ally.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 5 (triggering ally in the burst). The target takes half damage from the triggering attack, and the eladrin takes an equal amount of damage.

Skills Athletics +12, History +10, Nature +9
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+9) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword

Gnome Assassin — **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid — XP 300

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39 — **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +9
Speed 5 — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Katar (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage, or 4d6 + 8 if the attack ended the gnome's *shade form.*

Move Actions

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The gnome must be adjacent to a creature.
Effect: The gnome teleports up to 3 squares to a square adjacent to a different creature, and any mark on the gnome ends.

Minor Actions

Shade Form ✦ **Recharge when first bloodied**
Effect: The gnome assumes a shadowy form that lasts until it makes an attack roll or until the end of its next turn. While in this form, it is insubstantial and has vulnerable 5 radiant. In addition, it can make Stealth checks to become hidden if it has any cover or concealment.
Sustain Minor: The shadowy form persists until the end of the gnome's next turn.

Skills Stealth +12

Str 10 (+3)	**Dex** 19 (+7)	**Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 14 (+5)	**Int** 14 (+5)	**Cha** 16 (+6)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, 2 katars

Unkindness of Ravens (R) — **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (swarm) — XP 250

HP 65; **Bloodied** 32 — **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17 — **Perception** +5
Speed 3, fly 8 — Low-light vision
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 5 against close and area attacks

Traits

Claws and Beaks ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 damage.

Blot the Sun
An unkindness of ravens blocks line of sight. Creatures entirely in its space are blinded.

Standard Actions

Unkind Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded until the unkindness of ravens' next turn.

Triggered Actions

Scattering of Feathers (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The unkindness is first bloodied.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The unkindness is removed from play until the start of its next turn. When the effect ends, the unkindness returns to play in any space within 5 squares of the space it last occupied.

Str 4 (+0)	**Dex** 19 (+7)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 9 (+2)	**Int** 3 (-1)	**Cha** 6 (+1)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** –

4 Eladrin Bow Mages (M) — **Level 7 Minion Artillery**
Medium fey humanoid — XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. — **Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +10
Speed 6 — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Force Arrow (force, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 7 force damage, and the eladrin can push the target 1 square.

Move Actions

Fey Step (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The eladrin teleports up to 5 squares.

Str 12 (+4)	**Dex** 18 (+7)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 13 (+4)	**Int** 14 (+5)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Common, Elven

2 Dryad Hunters (D) — **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid — XP 300 each

HP 82; **Bloodied** 41 — **Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +10
Speed 8 (forest walk) — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, or 3d8 + 8 if no other enemy is adjacent to the dryad.

Luring Feint ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The dryad uses *claw* and then shifts up to half its speed. The dryad can shift up to its speed if the attack misses. After the shift, the dryad pulls the target of the attack up to 4 squares.

Move Actions

Treestride (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.
Effect: The dryad teleports up to 8 squares to a square adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 28 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Str 16 (+6)	**Dex** 18 (+7)	**Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 18 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 13 (+4)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Elven

Tactics

The dryads do not enter the ruin. They use *deceptive veil* to appear as nubile, young elf maidens. Then, they use *treestride* to maneuver into position where they can use *luring feint*.

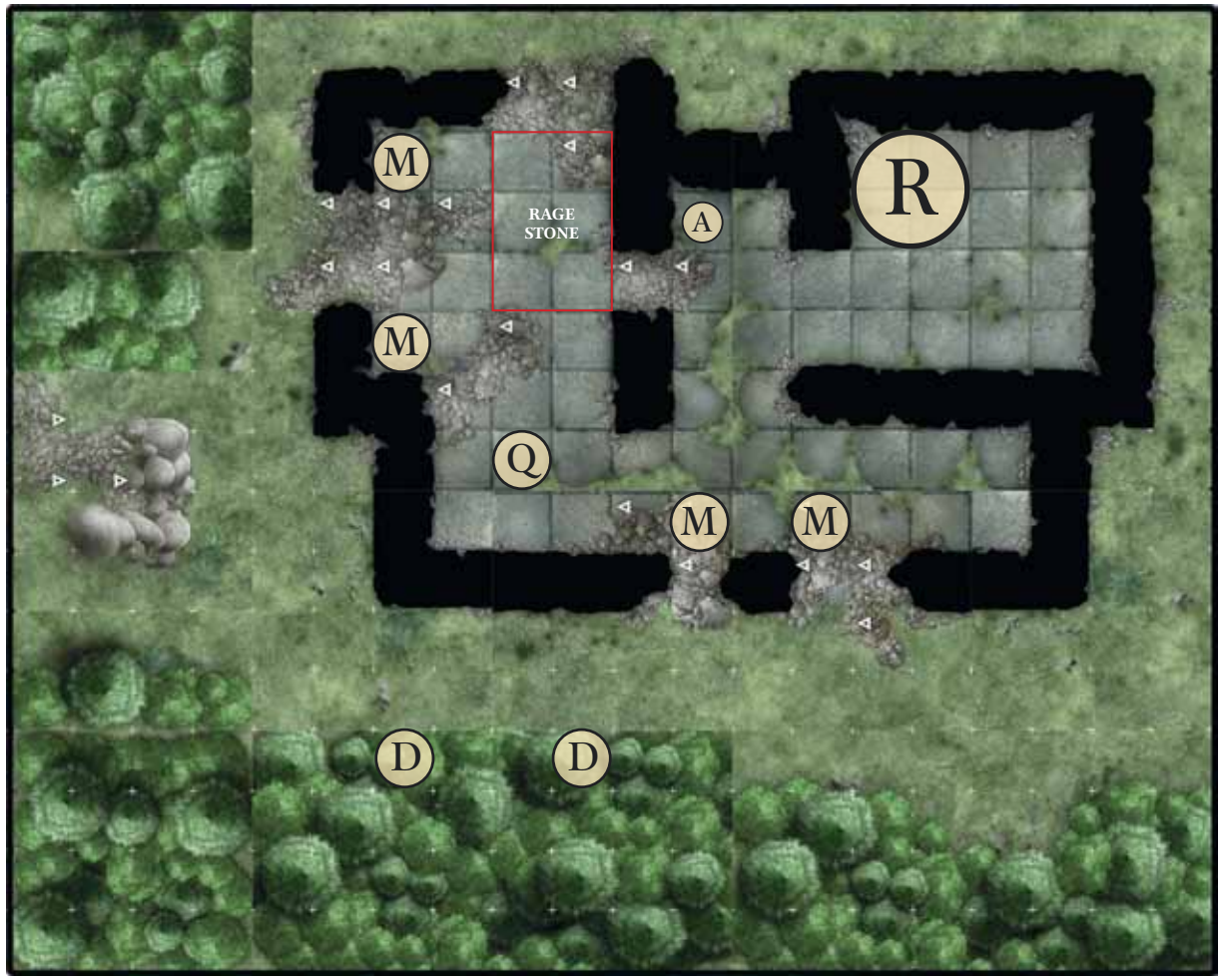
Meanwhile, the eladrin bow mages use *force arrow* from inside the ruin to benefit from superior cover. They reserve *fey step* in case an enemy enters the tower, at which point they teleport outside and continue their attacks.

The gnome assassin hides inside the tower and uses *katar* against the first enemy to enter. It then uses *shade form* in preparation for its next attack.

If the unkindness of ravens is present, it flies out through the open roof and descends on the characters outside the tower, entering their spaces and blinding them.

Finally, Querelian stays to keep the gnome and, if possible, the dryads in range of his aura. He supports the artillery with *force bolts* until presented with an enemy he can fight in melee. He likely leads with *mad dance*, though he uses *stab of the wild* against an adjacent enemy or *befuddling strike* if faced with two enemies. Querelian uses *Feywild challenge* against enemies that focus their attacks against the gnome assassin.

All creatures here fight to the death.



Features of the Area

Illumination: Outside the tower, illumination depends on the time of day. Torches inside the tower fill it with bright light.

Boulders: Boulders grant cover and count as difficult terrain.

Rubble: Rubble-filled squares are difficult terrain.

Rage Stone: A creature that starts its turn in a square of rage stone must make a melee attack on that turn or take 5 psychic damage.

Woods: Woods squares contain trees and underbrush. They are difficult terrain and heavily obscured.

Treasure: The characters find a level 8 common item, a level 10 uncommon item, a black pearl (500 gp), 5 pearls (100 gp each), 4 *potions of healing*, and a silver coffer (100 gp) holding 300 gp.

Concluding the Adventure

"Bark at the Moon" can end in a number of ways. The ideal outcome is that the war between the werebeasts and eladrin is stopped, Querelian is defeated, and Viktor Mazan is saved. Depending on the characters actions, all, some, or none of the objectives can be achieved. Failure, even a partial one, should serve to create new complications for further adventures in the Feywild. Then again, this jaunt into the Feywild might be enough and if so, successful adventurers or those smarting from defeat can emerge a little more seasoned than when they began.

Viktor Mazan

If the werewolf lord survives and the characters block the war, he emerges more powerful than before and with greater support. He leads the lycanthropes into a new age of strength and power. One day, he might turn hungry eyes beyond his border and reignite the war he fought to stop.

Mazan's death creates a vacuum in the Vale, one that another warlord could fill. If no one steps forward, the Vale may descend into total savagery and eventually force the eladrin to step forward to contain the growing violence. A strong warlord could stabilize the land. The adventurers might find an heir among the clans and help prop him or her up to usher in a new era of peace between the fey and werebeast peoples. As a wild option, a player character infected with lycanthropy might step into that position and take the campaign down a completely different path.

Querelian

The eladrin knight's survival is unimportant if war does break out. The eladrin and lycanthropes explode into violence far greater than that seen during the first War of the Pelt. The heroes might choose a side in the conflict: although the werebeasts are evil, they are also the wronged party in this war; Mithrendain may be easier to deal with, but its leaders could have averted this war. Even if the characters manage to stop Querelian, he is not the only eladrin who wants to purge the lycanthropes from the Vale. The heroes could still become entangled in more complex plots to renew the war.

Additional Encounters

You can use the following encounters to replace those skipped during the adventure or to give the characters additional challenges. If you add extra encounters, consider extending the timeline so the characters have a chance to take an extra extended rest.

Poachers

Level 6 Encounter (1,450 XP)

- ✦ 1 young owlbear (level 8 brute; *Monster Vault*, page 234)
- ✦ 2 gnoll blood callers (level 6 soldier; *Monster Vault*, page 144)
- ✦ 3 death-pledged gnolls (level 5 brute; *Monster Vault*, page 144)

A gnoll band has cornered a young owlbear and intends to make a meal of its succulent flesh. At your option, the young owlbear might become a handy companion character for the adventurers (see *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* for details).

Wolf Pack Scouts

Level 6 Encounter (1,300 XP)

- ✦ 2 frenzied werewolves (level 6 brute; *Monster Vault*, page 195)
- ✦ 5 dire wolves (level 5 skirmisher; *Monster Vault*, page 304)

A mated pair of werewolves lead a wolf pack in search of fresh meat.

Eladrin Scouts

Level 7 Encounter (1,550 XP)

- ✦ 1 eladrin twilight incanter (level 8 controller; *Monster Vault*, page 115)
- ✦ 4 dryad hunters (level 7 skirmisher; *Monster Vault*, page 92)

An eladrin loyal to Querelian crosses into the Feywild to gather information about the werebeast clans.

Arachnid Hunters

Level 7 Encounter (1,500 XP)

- ✦ 5 doomspinner spiders (level 7 controller; *Monster Vault*, page 302)

Doomspinner spiders have staked a claim on a ruined keep and regard intruders as lunch.

Arachnid Hunters

Level 8 Encounter (1,900 XP)

- ✦ 1 autumn nymph (level 8 skirmisher; *Monster Manual 3*, page 151)
- ✦ 4 verbeeg rowdies (level 9 skirmisher; *Monster Manual 3*, page 200)

An autumn nymph entertains several young verbeeg rowdies in a forest glade. If the characters dispatch the giants, the nymph might impart a clue to the heroes, impressed as she is by their strength.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer who has contributed design to or developed over one hundred roleplaying game titles for the Dungeons & Dragons® RPG, *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, *A Song of Ice and Fire RPG*, *Star Wars RPG*, and the d20 system. Some of his more recent work for Wizards of the Coast can be found in *Player's Handbook 3*, *Martial Power 2*, and *Draconomicon 2: Metallic Dragons*. In addition, he's a regular contributor to both *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazines. Robert lives, works, and will probably die in Tennessee.

PARAGON 11-20

The Whispering Glade

An Adventure Locale for Characters Levels 12-14

By Steve Winter

Illustration by William O'Connor
Cartography by Jason Engle

"The Whispering Glade" is a trio of encounters set at a single location that you can drop into any larger adventure or cross-country journey. It's equally suitable for a home-grown campaign, a published Dungeons & Dragons® campaign setting, or the Chaos Scar. It is designed for characters of levels 12-14. Because of the short time involved and the deviousness of the enemy, this can be a suddenly and deceptively dangerous situation.

Synopsis

The glade is home to a pair of hag sisters and their forest allies and servitors. They try to misdirect infrequent visitors away from their lair, which is hidden in a forgotten eladrin tomb.

The encounter begins when characters stop in the glade for any reason: to camp for the night, for a midday rest, to look for traces of monsters or kidnapped NPCs they're tracking, or just out of curiosity. As they begin poking around where they're not

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wanted, a group of dryads tries to trick them into leaving. If that ruse fails, the dryads attack.

When characters discover the entrance to the hags' lair, the stage is set for a battle against them and their spider guards, followed by an exploration of the tomb.

Finally, when characters leave the tomb, they are ambushed by the hags' late-arriving allies—a pack of trolls.

Insight Checks

The dryads and hags in this encounter rely heavily on illusions to mask their identities at least long enough to surprise the intruders. The moment you ask players for Insight checks, however, they know that something is afoot. Skilled roleplayers might separate their knowledge from the characters' suspicion and even feign surprise when the unexpected happens, but the chance for genuine surprise is lost. It's advised, therefore, that you make a note of the characters' Insight scores at the beginning of the game session and then make key Insight checks secretly for the players. This way, you can reveal only what they notice without unduly tipping your hand. In general, we don't advise this because players like rolling their own dice. This is a special case, and it calls for special treatment.

The Glade

The glade is a small clearing in an otherwise dense woods. Travel off the path or trail is impossibly slow because of the entangling underbrush. Clearings are few and far between in this wilderness, making this an ideal spot to camp. (You don't need to point that out to players. When they stop to camp for the night, this is where they are.)

If you lay out the encounter with *Dungeon Tiles* as shown, set up the tiles atop another battlemat if you have one, so that the grid extends all around. Squares outside the mapped area are thick with tangled brush, boulders, and exposed tree roots, but characters can leave the tiles and move through the obstructed squares if they choose. Off the tiles, all squares are:

- lightly obscured—creatures more than 5 squares away from you have total concealment, while creatures within 5 squares of you have partial concealment;
- difficult terrain—each square costs 2 squares to enter; and
- challenging terrain—characters and creatures must make either an Athletics or Acrobatics check against DC 20 in the first nontile square they enter in every move action. Failure indicates that the creature is slowed until the end of this move action. Creatures with forest walk are exempt from this restriction.

When setting the stage for the initial battle, do not set up or draw anything to the south of the southernmost cliff section. This higher area can't be seen from the glade proper, and setting it up will only tip off the characters that something important is up there.

Features of the Glade

Boulders: At the southern edge of the glade is a heap of boulders that tumbled down from the cliffs immediately to the south and east. These are very rugged, hindering terrain; a character or creature is slowed automatically when it enters or begins a move action in one of these squares. The boulders are about 5 feet high. Creatures that fly or jump over the boulders are not slowed.

Camping Gear and Fire Scar: A fire scar in the clearing indicates that others have camped here. Near the fire scar is a heap of camping gear typical of traveling adventurers. At a glance, it looks as if someone else must be nearby. If anyone pokes through the gear, they'll notice right away that it's in poor condition. If someone examines it closely, allow a DC 14 Nature check. On a successful roll, the character realizes this gear has been lying here unused for at least a week (based on finding mildew, insects, mouse nests, a rusted frying pan, and the extent of dead grass beneath the pile).

Cliffs: The drop-offs surrounding the glade are 10 feet high. They can be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check (the faces are rough but loose and crumbly).

Trees: The center squares of the trees shown on the map represent the trees' trunks and are blocking terrain. The branches and greenery have no effect.

Whispering: Characters with passive Perception scores of 20 or higher are vaguely aware of a faint, directionless sound in the glade. When the wind rustles the trees, the sound can't be distinguished from the sighing branches. Only when the wind drops can this sound be picked out. It may be nothing more than a breeze through the leaves, but it also has a vocal quality, like a distant whisper.

Characters who hear the sound can attempt a DC 29 Nature check to identify it or pinpoint its source. Success assures the character that it's not just wind in the trees, and suggests that it seems to come from the south.

The Upper Ledge

When characters scramble over the boulders and cliff to the south, read the following:

Above the glade to the south is a ledge containing a smaller clearing. Stagnant water stands in a shallow pool along its western edge; a broken statue has toppled into it.

In the southeast corner is a cliff face about 10 feet high. Unlike the lower cliffs, which are mostly gravel and earth bound together by roots, this one is bedrock. A sturdy, locked oaken door is cleverly set into the stone. The door once bore a message in delicate lettering, but it's long since weathered away.

All of the following information can be gathered by characters with the indicated training or skill checks.

Passive Perception 14: The whispering sound is more distinct in this upper area.

Read Elven: The lettering on the door was Elven script, but it's impossible to make out any words.

History DC 20: The statue is an ancient eladrin tomb marker (eladrin get a +2 bonus to this check).

Nature (automatic, trained only): The statue has been lying in the muck for many decades but probably less than a century.

Dungeoneering DC 14 (trained only): Rust on the hinges and scrapes on the rock indicate that the door is used, but not very often. The last time it was opened probably was not more than a month ago.

Perception or Thievery DC 20: Air is blowing faintly out from around the door, and it carries the whispering sound. The smell is unpleasant.

Arcana DC 22 (trained only): The door is sealed with the Arcane Lock ritual.

The door is sturdier than it appears, thanks to the Arcane Lock ritual performed on it by the night hag. The DC to force the door open with Athletics or pick the lock with Thievery is 33. Only one Athletics and one Thievery check are allowed for the group. Let the character with the best skill modifier make the attempt; allies can help with the aid another action. If those checks fail, then the door is beyond the characters' ability to open through Strength or skill.

The other options for opening the door are the Knock ritual (also against DC 33) or physically destroying the door. It's equivalent to a reinforced, barred door (AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10; HPs 30).

When the door opens, a wave of cool, foul-smelling air pours out, bringing fine particles of dust with it. The whispering can be heard by everyone through the open door, but it's still faint and indistinct.

The Hags' Lair

Beyond the door, stone stairs descend 30 feet into the hillside. The passageway is cut with excellent artistry; any dwarf trained in Dungeoneering recognizes it as the work of eladrin. More Elven script is carved into the walls. Much of it is obscured by patches of lichen, but a few minutes of study by someone who reads Elven reveals that it is generic prayers to Corellon and funerary invocations to the Raven Queen.

Dim light spills down the staircase through the open doorway. The antechamber is completely dark. The funerary chamber is dimly lit by a single, smoky tallow lamp.

At the bottom of the stairs is a wooden door that's been smashed open. Characters who examine the next chamber from the doorway can learn the following, assuming they have a light source or another means of seeing in darkness. Allow each character to make a single skill check.

Automatic: The room is filled with cobwebs, and the floor is covered with rubble. The sickly smell is stronger here. A candle or torch will flicker in the faint movement of air from the antechamber, up the stairs, and out the doorway.

Perception DC 14: A very dim glow can be seen coming from the left wall about 10 feet into the room. If the characters douse their lights, the glow can be seen automatically.

Perception DC 20: This was an antechamber; there is a large doorway about 10 feet along the left wall.

Perception DC 28: Something is lurking in the antechamber. (The lurkers are a pair of cave spiders, which are hidden and invisible to the characters. The DC for this Perception skill check assumes that

the spiders rolled 10 on their Stealth checks. If you prefer, you can make the Stealth check for the spiders using their +18 Stealth modifier. Unless characters specifically hunt out the spiders, they remain silent and still in the cobwebs near the ceiling until they are called by the hags.)

The Funerary Chamber

The doors to the funerary chamber are nearly closed, but they won't close entirely because the hinges are broken. Read the following description when characters get their first look into the chamber.

At one time, this was a somber yet beautiful burial chamber. Now it is a filthy, reeking trolls' den, and the troll is here, glaring at you. Bones and rotting animal carcasses are strewn in the corners. A portion of the floor has collapsed and opened a yawning pit into blackness.

The bladerager troll is among the least intelligent members of a race known for its stupidity. This one is not sure what to do, because the hags were in a hurry and did not give it clear instructions. That means it will fall back on instinct and attack as soon as it sees an opening. It fights alone; neither the hags nor the spiders come to its aid. The characters should be able to dispatch it with relative ease.

The troll is only a distraction. The hag sisters and their spider allies are the real threat.

The hags are hiding inside the sarcophagi. The 'whispering' heard by the characters was mainly the sound of the hags performing a Corpselike Visage ritual (*Dragon* magazine #385). Before performing the ritual, both used *change shape* to assume the visages of the noble eladrin couple who were buried here. They then climbed into the sarcophagi and perform Corpselike Visage to extinguish all signs of life in their bodies. Once the ritual was performed, the troll replaced the lids as instructed and then waited, though he didn't know what for.

Features of the Lair

Alcoves: Two alcoves at the back of the chamber once displayed treasured personal effects of the eladrin entombed here. These were items with sentimental or family value: locks of hair from parents or children, poems from loved ones, favorite jewelry, and other personal treasures. The shrine on the left was torn open by the trolls in a search for treasure. When they found none, they didn't bother demolishing the other alcove. Everything in the surviving shrine has been reduced to dust by the passing centuries, but it remains secure behind ornamental bars.

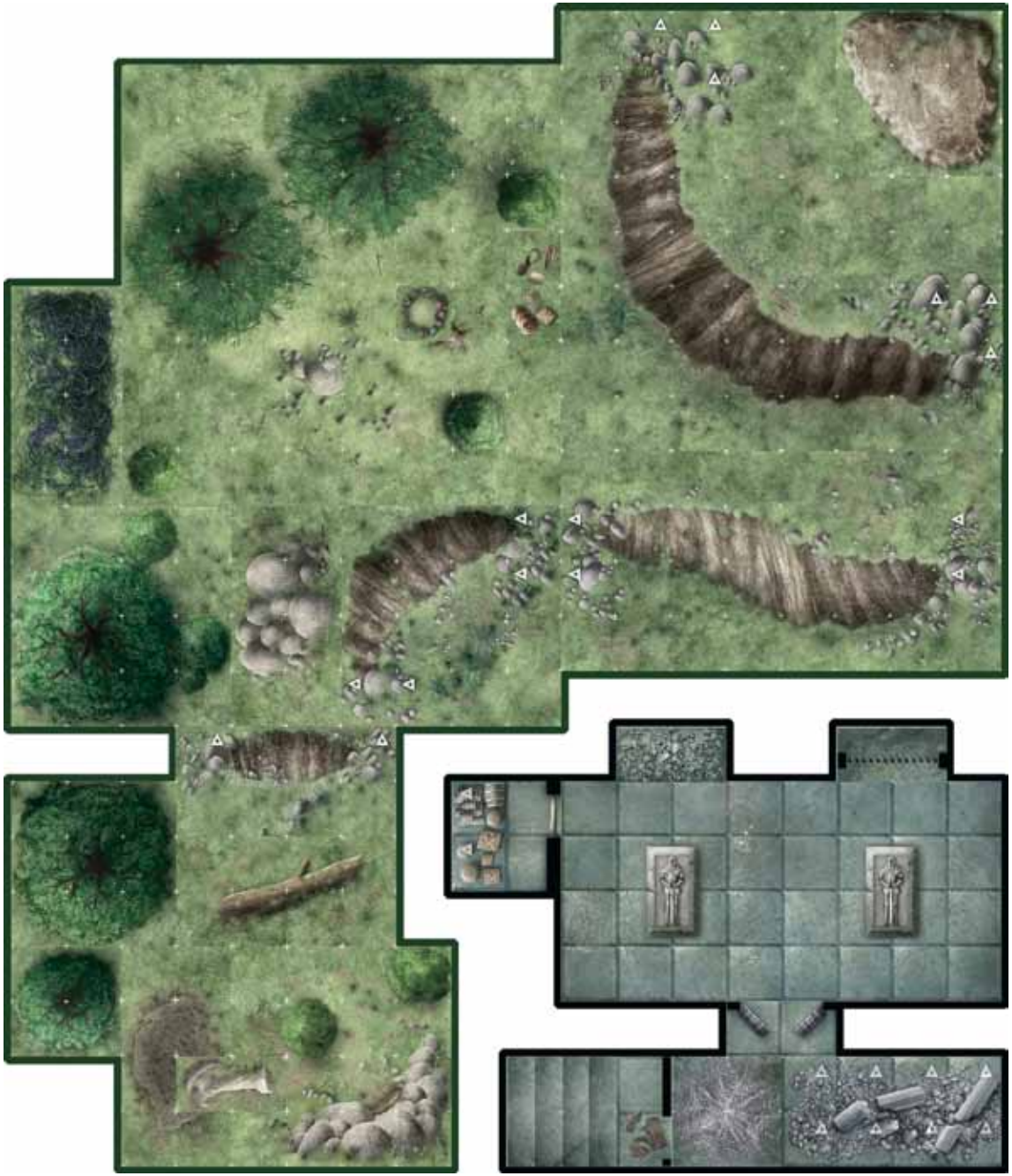
Pit: The floor between the sarcophagi has collapsed. A miasmic stench rises from the hole and wafts through the funerary chamber, up the stairs, and out the door. Vague sounds of groaning, howling, and sighing ride on the rising air. This, combined with the hags' ritual chant, created the 'whispering' that the characters heard in the glade. The source of the sound depends on what you decide to place in the hole. It could be the moaning of captives, or the natural (or unnatural) exhalations of the earth.

Where this hole came from and where it leads is up to you. If the adventure goes no farther than this chamber, then it may be nothing more than a 10-foot-deep garbage pit. It could lead to a lower, natural chamber where the hags keep prisoners, torture trolls, perform more complex rituals, or store their wealth. Or, it could be a shaft dug by an umber hulk or purple worm that broke into this chamber centuries ago. Such a tunnel could lead to an entire network of caves and passages and ultimately, the Underdark.

Sarcophagi: These stone coffins appear to never have been disturbed. Their lids are carved with effigies of an eladrin nobleman and noblewoman. Inside each is a perfectly preserved body that matches the person depicted on the lid in every respect (except one; see below). No sign of life can be detected in them, thanks to the Corpselike Visage ritual. Because of the hags' *change shape* power, the bodies can be recognized as duplicates only with a DC 33 Insight check. A dead body is exactly what you expect to find in a sarcophagus, so this check is not automatically called for. Allow it only if a player declares that he's examining one of the bodies specifically for signs of anything suspicious. Searching for treasure doesn't qualify.

An Insight check can be triggered one other way. The Corpselike Visage ritual requires a focus—an amulet of false life. Each hag wears one. These look like completely unremarkable lockets with no appreciable value. They are, however, the only details on the corpses that don't match the effigies. If a character actually examines one of the effigies before opening the sarcophagus or compares the effigy to the corpse, then make an Insight check for that character. (It's best if you make this roll; asking for it will instantly tip off the players that their vague suspicions about the bodies are justified.)

Stench: The air in the funerary chamber is a lung-searing mix of rot, filth, and toxic fumes from the cauldron where the hags cook their potions and their nauseating meals. Every character must make a DC 20 Endurance check upon first entering the funerary chamber, and another when they first become bloodied anywhere in the underground area. Failure



on either check means that the character regains hit points equal to onlyhalf his healing surge value when he spends a healing surge. Bonuses from healing powers and magic items are not reduced. This penalty lasts until the end of the character's next short rest. Failure on either check also means that the character can't take a short rest anywhere in this underground area. He must get into the fresh air aboveground to recover.

Storeroom: A locked door stands in the west wall. The crude lock was meant only to discourage the trolls from pilfering. It can be picked with a DC 20 Thievery check. Allow a character just one chance to open the lock. The door, too, is flimsy; it can be smashed or broken off its hinges with a DC 16 Strength check.

The storeroom contains the hags' treasure. See "Rewards" at the end of the adventure for details.

Besides treasure and potions, the storeroom also contains racks of potion ingredients. Characters trained in Arcana and Nature can identify most of them but probably won't want to use them.

Events and Tactics

This encounter does not proceed according to a script. Events are triggered by what the characters do or don't do.

Glade Guardians

The glade is guarded by three dryad witches and six bough dryad minions. They watch the glade from the cover of the surrounding forest, where they are effectively invisible until they reveal themselves.

If the characters grow too suspicious about the glade—for example, if they look as if they're going to

mount a thorough search of the area for whoever left behind the heap of gear or show an undue interest in the southern side of the glade—the three dryad witches use *deceptive veil* to take on the appearance of three eladrin travelers. They step out of the forest, act surprised to see strangers, and then welcome the characters to their camp. They claim to have been passing through the area when they discovered this idyllic spot and decided to stay and enjoy it. They've now been here for nearly a week, and are getting ready to move on.

Make a secret DC 29 Insight check for each character to determine whether they see through the dryads' illusions. If they do, or if they persist in exploring the upper ledge area, the dryads attack (but don't drop their disguises). They should be able to gain a surprise round against most, if not all, of the characters. The bough dryads join in as soon as the fight develops.

The dryads use forest walk to maximum advantage by maneuvering and hiding in the obstructing terrain around the glade. The three dryad witches serve the hags out of fear and resent their position. When all of the minions are slain, the witches choose to serve themselves over the hags and melt away into the forest.

It's possible that the characters and the players will be completely taken in by the dryads/eladrin. If that's the case, go with it. The dryads may continue the ruse until the characters leave in the morning, or they might choose to attack the characters in their sleep.

The dryads carry no treasure. Whatever they possess is hidden so deep in the forest that the characters could never find it.

The Hags

Like the dryads, the hag sisters depend on illusion to gain the upper hand against intruders. Although dream hags don't usually have the ability to change shape, this one has gained it through a regimen of potions brewed with painful extractions from her younger, weaker sister.

Their troll servant will fight bravely but futilely when discovered. He is too stupid to realize that he might bargain for his life by betraying the hags. If the characters suggest negotiations, or capture the troll and try to force information from him, judge for yourself the best course of action depending on the situation and what you know about your players.

If the hags sense imminent danger while feigning death, they spring to the attack. Like the dryads, they have an excellent chance to gain a surprise round. They don't drop their disguises until they're slain.

As soon as a fight begins in the funerary chamber, four cave spiders that were hiding in webs near the ceiling of the antechamber join the attack.

The hags' intent, however, is simply to fool the characters while lying safely in the eladrins' coffins. They know that their troll allies will arrive shortly and, when they see the opened door, will prepare an ambush for when the characters emerge from the underground lair. If the characters are duped by the hags' ruse, then the hags will follow them out of the lair and join the trolls in destroying the intruders. They will beckon to their spiders to come, too, but whether the spiders are willing to leave the reassuring darkness of the tomb is up to you and your assessment of the situation. If all of these enemies join together into a single force, the characters will be in serious trouble.

The burial chamber and antechamber are tight on space, which will hamper the characters when it comes to a fight. What's more, the dream hag is a tough, high-level enemy.

The hags are likely to fight to the death; this is their home, after all. Alternatively, when one of the sisters is killed, the other might dive down the pit to escape into whatever warren of caves lies beneath the funerary chamber. Consider this option if the outlook is grim for the characters but they manage to defeat one of the hags.

Troll Ambush

Whatever happens in the hags' lair, the characters will be attacked when they return to the glade. One battle troll and three bladerager trolls are set up in what they judge to be the most advantageous ambush positions. They are most likely to hide in the undergrowth along the forest edge, but trolls are not known for their subtlety. Their Stealth checks to hide are made with only a +10 skill modifier, so characters are likely to spot the trolls before the ambush is sprung unless the characters are being particularly lax about security.

The foul atmosphere in the hags' lair probably will drive the characters back to the surface before they can take a short rest. Then the trolls will attack immediately, making this one continuous encounter. That means characters can't regain encounter powers or their second wind and can't spend healing surges before launching into another fight. If someone spent an action point while fighting the hags, they can't spend another against the trolls. This will be a tough battle.

Rewards

The hags keep their treasure in the storeroom off the funerary chamber. It consists of gold, gems, magic items, and mundane gear stolen from travelers who were murdered in the glade. The equivalent of three treasure parcels is recommended.

When selecting treasure, be especially generous with potions. Brewing was the hags' specialty, and they should have built up a sizable stockpile.

Add up the experience value of all the defeated creatures. This can vary depending on how the characters approached the adventure, but if they defeated everything, nothing escaped, and they didn't avoid any combat, the total amounts to 10,450 XP. Wiping out the hag threat, making the glade safe for travelers, and cleaning the filth and corruption out of the eladrin burial chamber (assuming the characters do so) is worth a quest reward of another 4,000 XP. If characters don't bother to clean out the desecrated burial chamber, cut their quest reward in half.

About the Author

Steve Winter has been publishing D&D in one form or another since 1981, making him one of the longest-lasting full-timers in the RPG industry. He's had a dream job for 30 years and thoroughly enjoys it.

Dryad Witch **Level 8 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid (plant) XP 350

HP 84; **Bloodied** 42 **Initiative** +7
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22 **Perception** +14
Speed 8 (forest walk)

Standard Actions

⊕ **Thorny Vine** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.
Effect: The dryad can slide the target 1 square.

Beguiling Verdure (charm) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +11 vs. Will
Hit: The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.

Soporific Fragrance (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +11 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).

Move Actions

Treestride (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.
Effect: The dryad teleports up to 8 squares to a square adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 29 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Str 11 (+4)	**Dex** 17 (+7)	**Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 12 (+5)	**Int** 12 (+5)	**Cha** 16 (+7)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Elven

Bough Dryad **Level 15 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid (plant) XP 300

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +16
AC 29, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26 **Perception** +17
Speed 8 (forest walk)

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 11 damage, or 13 if no other enemy is adjacent to the dryad.

Triggered Actions

Boon of Life
Trigger: The dryad drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): Close burst 5 (one ally in the burst). The target gains 5 temporary hit points.

Str 21 (+12)	**Dex** 24 (+14)	**Wis** 21 (+12)
Con 24 (+14)	**Int** 11 (+7)	**Cha** 17 (+10)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Elven

Dream Hag **Level 19 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid XP 2,400

HP 179; **Bloodied** 89 **Initiative** +11
AC 33, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 32 **Perception** +21
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Traits

☼ **Nightmare Weaver** (charm) ✦ **Aura** 3
Any unconscious enemy that starts its turn within the aura stands up and is dominated until the end of its next turn. The enemy remains unconscious but takes a single action during its turn, chosen by the dream hag.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Staff of Mindless Reverie** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the hag's next turn.

✧ **Nightmare Visions** (charm, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + 14 psychic damage, and the hag slides the target 5 squares.

✧ **Dust of Dreams** (charm, sleep) ✦ **Recharge** 5 6
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in blast); +22 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target falls unconscious (save ends).

✧ **Sleep's Undeniable Grasp** (implement, sleep) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in blast); +22 vs. Will
Hit: The target falls unconscious (save ends). This effect also ends if the target is attacked by the hag or one of its allies.

Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Insight +21

Str 10 (+9)	**Dex** 14 (+11)	**Wis** 24 (+16)
Con 19 (+13)	**Int** 21 (+14)	**Cha** 19 (+13)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Supernal
Equipment staff

Night Hag **Level 14 Lurker**
Medium fey humanoid (shapechanger) XP 1,000

HP 109; **Bloodied** 54 **Initiative** +15
AC 27, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 26 **Perception** +10
Speed 8 Darkvision

Traits

☼ **Shroud of Night** ✦ **Aura** 10
Within the aura, bright light is dim light, and dim light is darkness.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage. If the hag has combat advantage against the target, the target is also stunned (save ends).

⨁ **Dream Haunting** (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one stunned or unconscious creature); +18 vs. Will
Hit: 3d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the hag disappears into the target's mind. While in this state, the hag is removed from play and does nothing on subsequent turns but deal 3d6 + 4 psychic damage to the target (no attack roll required). When the target is no longer stunned or unconscious, or when the target dies, the hag reappears adjacent to the target and is insubstantial until the start of its next turn.

✧ **Wave of Sleep** (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +17 vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is unconscious instead of dazed (save ends).

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The hag alters its physical form to appear as a crone of any Medium humanoid race until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, the hag must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 33 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

Skills Arcana +14, Bluff +16, Intimidate +16, Stealth +16

Str 22 (+13)	**Dex** 18 (+11)	**Wis** 17 (+10)
Con 19 (+11)	**Int** 14 (+9)	**Cha** 18 (+11)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Cave Spider **Level 12 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural beast (spider) XP 175

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +15
AC 26, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22 **Perception** +11
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb) Darkvision, tremorsense 5
Resist 10 poison

Traits

Web Walk
The spider ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 10 damage, plus 5 poison damage if the target is immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious.

Minor Actions

✧ **Tethering Web** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Skills Athletics +17, Stealth +18

Str 22 (+12)	**Dex** 24 (+13)	**Wis** 20 (+11)
Con 19 (+10)	**Int** 1 (+1)	**Cha** 8 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Battle Troll **Level 12 Soldier**
Large natural humanoid XP 700

HP 124; **Bloodied** 62 **Initiative** +12
AC 28, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 22 **Perception** +8
Speed 7

Traits

Regeneration
The troll regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the troll takes fire or acid damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Troll Healing (healing)
Whenever an attack that doesn't deal acid or fire damage reduces the troll to 0 hit points, the troll does not die and instead falls unconscious until the start of its next turn, when it returns to life with 15 hit points. If an attack hits the troll and deals any acid or fire damage while the troll is unconscious, it does not return to life in this way.

Standard Actions

Broadsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 8 damage. If the attack bloodies the target, the troll uses *broadsword* against it again.
Effect: The troll marks the target until the end of the troll's next turn.

Sweeping Strike (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 23 (+12)	**Dex** 19 (+10)	**Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 20 (+11)	**Int** 6 (+4)	**Cha** 10 (+6)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment scale armor, broadsword

Bladerager Troll **Level 12 Brute**
Large natural humanoid XP 700

HP 151; **Bloodied** 75 **Initiative** +10
AC 24, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 **Perception** +9
Speed 7

Traits

Regeneration
The troll regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the troll takes fire or acid damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 9 damage. If the attack bloodies the target, the troll regains the use of *bladerager rend*.

Bladerager Rend ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Death Burst
Trigger: The troll drops to 0 hit points.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +15 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + 7 damage.
Effect: The troll is destroyed.

Str 23 (+12)	**Dex** 18 (+10)	**Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 21 (+11)	**Int** 3 (+2)	**Cha** 8 (+5)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Court of Stars
The Bramble Queen

By Ari Marmell ✦ illustrations by Tyler Jacobson

Throughout the world, often uncomfortably near to isolated towns struggling for survival, stand patches of woodland which ignore the turning of the seasons. The leaves are crimson and gold year round; they crunch underfoot when outsiders pass but remain silent as plush carpet beneath the paws, hooves, or boots of predators. Roots protrude from the soil like nooses around the necks of buried corpses, grasping at passing ankles. Moss and branches shift without benefit of breeze, making even experienced rangers lose their way; tiny animals dart across the paths, erasing evidence of footfalls; the calls of distant birds echo without direction and without end.

Here, in the deep shadows where the sun never peers and where even the most innocent of berries grow plump with venom, the poor, lost traveler may find himself confronted by a pack of wolves more hostile than any natural beast. Another may stumble upon the grove of a vicious dryad, the den of a wood bride, or the cottage of a hag.

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But if you are truly unfortunate, if the moon and the stars and the wind are just right, if the doors between worlds gape wide, you may find yourself in the demesne of the Bramble Queen, in the shadow of her so-called Grieving Palace. There, the rustling of the leaves is contemptuous laughter, the howling of the wind the echoing cries of those who have come before you.

And like them, oh my friend, you will most assuredly never leave.

If the creatures of the Feywild are known for any one thing above all others, it is their love—one might even say *need*—for trickery and deception. Of those tricks, perhaps the most infamous, and the most frequently employed, is the image of a beautiful maiden or innocent old grandmother, used by dryads, hags, and many others to lure passing mortals to any one of a dozen unpleasant fates.

Nearly all such fey offer their reverence and respect, if not necessarily their obedience, to Selephra, the Bramble Queen—a creature of growth and joy turned dark and twisted by the worst urges of fey and mortals both. The Bramble Queen manipulates events from her home in the Grieving Palace and from her position in the Green Court of the Feywild, ever working to expand her reach and to entrap and slaughter countless mortals in her hopeless quest to quench her burning wrath in a deluge of blood.

History of the Bramble Queen

The fey are beings of mystery and dream, emotion and symbolism. Few tales of them speak the entire truth—and truth itself is fluid where such creatures are concerned. But if one were to take the various fables of the Bramble Queen, sift through them for common elements and various details that *sound* more or less true, then one might well end up with this tale.

Spring of Youth

Selephra was one of most favored offspring of Oran, Lord of the Green Fey, and—depending on which tale or scholar you believe—either one of the first of the ancient dryads, or else one of the race that would become hags, before they were cursed with the hideousness for which they are now known.

Selephra was a flighty creature, joyful and impetuous. She held great sway in the Green Court, in part due to her noble rank and many devoted followers, in part because of the love and indulgence of her father, though she rarely exercised that power. She preferred exploring the wilds to politicking in the Court of Stars, and dwelling in her own bucolic cottage to her father's oaken abode. In other words, she was very much the stereotypical harmless fey, pampered without being spoiled, passionate but without malevolence ...

Until she met Torrheval.

Summer of Passion

Some tales say he was mortal, others that he was fey, still others that he was a mix of both. Some claim they were lovers; others that he was a long-lost half-brother of Selephra's; and again, a few claim he was both, for the ways of the fey are not the ways of mortals.

Torrheval was not the first man to win Selephra's affections, but he certainly was the first she truly loved. Perhaps she was attracted to his rigid sense of honor, for where she was capricious, he was dedicated to duty and his people. Selephra surrounded herself with friends, servants, and petitioners devoted solely to her; but Torrheval, though taken with the fey princess and eager to spend much time in her company, would not schedule his life around her whims. In her love for Torrheval, Selephra found herself maturing as she had not in the many previous centuries. (It must be said that even the wild-hearted Oran was delighted at this change in his daughter, and he nudged her toward taking a more active role amongst the Green Fey. She, perhaps in tribute to her lover, began to do just that.)

For months, or years, or decades—in the Feywild, these are often all the same—Selephra and Torrheval rode, and lived, and loved, and governed together. But fate is more fickle than any fey, and even in the Feywild, time stops for no one.

There came a time when warriors and soldiers from eladrin courts mobilized for war, to thwart the efforts of fomorian-led witches in the mortal realm. As one of those eladrin warriors, Torrheval was prepared to lead an entire brigade of Green Fey into battle. Selephra would have gone with him, to fight at his side, but her father forbade her from traveling into such danger. She would have begged her love not to

go, but she knew he'd think less of her for asking—and she of him, if he agreed.

So she stood at the very edge of her wooded demesne and watched as Torrheval rode into the distance, resplendent in his gleaming armor, mounted proudly atop his snow-white warhorse. For a time, she spent her hours frolicking in the forest or debating in the courts of the fey, but each day she returned to that spot at the edge of the woods and watched for his return.

Autumn Eternal

A few soldiers, and then a few more, trickled back home, telling tales of great battles and vile curses and powerful magic, but Torrheval did not appear. Each day, Selephra spent longer and longer waiting for him to return. She ignored her duties, ignored her friends.

Finally, Selephra would not move from her vigil. She sat at the edge of the woods, her back to an ancient tree, and swore that she would wait there for Torrheval however long it took.

For year upon year, she kept that vow until the branches and roots and thorns of the forest grew through her flesh to wrap themselves around heart and bone. She heard the voices of the animals and the whispers of the leaves, and she came to understand them. Her father begged her to return to him, to return to her own life, but to no avail.

It was one of Lord Oran's chief advisors, an old satyr by the name of Enkaros, who finally persuaded Selephra to abandon her vigil. He told her tales he had heard of a mortal sorceress who had allied with the fomorians and who was said to hold a general of the fey imprisoned within her castle. When Enkaros offered to take Selephra to the castle to learn whether it was indeed Torrheval who was imprisoned there, the princess of the Green Court rose. Roots and ivy tore from the earth and dangled from her flesh as she stood. Supported by unsteady feet and those selfsame vines, she followed the satyr into the mortal realm.

There, accompanied by dozens of fey and tapping into wells of power she had not touched in years, Selephra tore through the castle's defenders and wards. She obliterated whole towers, slaughtered regiments, and slew the sorceress with her own hands.

In an unlocked room in the highest tower, she found her beloved Torrheval. He had grown older over the years beyond the Feywild. When he saw the creature of vines and brambles and recognized her as Selephra, he recoiled.

The decades Selephra had waited weighed on her like an eternity. She had, in her mind, returned from the dead to rescue her love. And he flinched away, as if she were a monster! As if he did not owe her eternal penitence for her suffering on his behalf.

Selephra's fury was boundless. This was not the man she loved. Her warrior would have fought the entire mortal race to return to her. This room was a bedchamber, not a prison.

When Selephra withdrew, no wall of the castle stood upright and no tower rose above the rubble. She returned to the Feywild, leaving only split stone and broken corpses behind.

For a time, Selephra involved herself in the politics of the Green Fey, but she was guided by hatred and bitterness, not joy. She urged the court to move against mortals, to torment and destroy them without cause. Many lesser fey of the court grew spiteful and deceitful under her influence; indeed, it was then that dryads first developed their ability to take on illusory human guise. Many of Oran's advisors begged the Green Lord to remove his daughter from the court, but he could not bring himself to do so.

In the end, he did not need to. Selephra's rage could not be slaked by political manipulation alone. She and her followers abandoned the day-to-day governance of the woodland demesnes. The self-proclaimed Bramble Queen had better things—more awful things—to do with her time.

The Bramble Queen Today

The Bramble Queen has become a creature of hatred and malice. Her most intensive loathing is reserved for mortals, and specifically males, but she despises all creatures to a greater or lesser extent. Her only joy comes in tormenting others. She particularly delights in stripping victims of their loved ones or causing them to become lost in the wild, where she fills their last days and hours with grief and fear before moving in for the kill. While she no longer possesses any ability to charm or dominate—such powers were washed away in the flood of rage that made her what she is—she enjoys watching while her followers who do possess those abilities turn friends, families, and lovers against each other.

While Selephra is most directly associated with dryads, she has become something of a patron for a wider variety of fey who use illusion, shapeshifting, and similar deception in their hunt for victims. Her followers form a court unto themselves within the Green Fey, consisting largely of dryads, hags, lamias, and wood brides (see below). Even such creatures who are not Selephra's vassals pay her a degree of homage. The Bramble Queen, in turn, asks little of them save that they follow their nature by enticing mortals to emotional slavery or death.

THE GRIEVING PALACE

Selephra's so-called "Grieving Palace" is nothing more than the cottage in which she dwelt during the days before Torrheval disappeared. The walls are peeling, the roof full of holes, the windows filthy. On the rare occasions when the Bramble Queen grants outsiders an audience, her servants offer weak tea and sour wine in cracked cups to guests seated on dust-covered chairs. Asking about this discrepancy, or pointing out in any way that the place is anything other than the "palace" Selephra claims it to be, is just one of the countless ways of offending her.

Because of her political aspirations and machinations, malevolent as they might be, Selephra is sometimes willing to cooperate with mortals or rival fey that she would normally not hesitate to kill, if she believes the cooperating will advance her agenda. She finds such situations extremely difficult and has been known to take any excuse to slaughter her "allies" rather than endure their demands and their presence. She is quick to take offense, or to pounce on the slightest violation of the labyrinthine traditions of fey honor and courtly behavior, as justification for violence or for breaking agreements or treaties. While many fey develop a grudging respect for mortals who are capable of negotiating the convoluted traditions of the Court of Stars, the Bramble Queen simply grows more resentful of anyone who refuses to provide her an excuse for bloodshed.

Selephra prefers to wreak her vengeance on the mortal world directly by hunting victims much as her servants do. She particularly enjoys destroying famous heroes or beloved leaders through the pain and grief of unendurable loss. She and her minions have destroyed communities and ignited wars with a few well-plotted murders and kidnappings.

Eventually, the Bramble Queen even picked up again the mantle of the Court of Stars in an effort to guide the Green Fey in violent and vicious directions. She plays upon the fey's mighty pride and on old grudges to turn otherwise reasonable, peaceful fey against mortal races. She seeks to expand her power, her authority in the court, and her cabal of vassals, all to no other end than the chance to spill more mortal blood or to enlarge her stable of slaves.

Enemies, Allies, and Minions

The bulk of the Bramble Queen's "court" consists of fey who use shapeshifting, illusion, and similar deceptions to hunt their prey. While Selephra's hatred of males isn't as strong when it comes to other fey as it is regarding mortals, few if any of her closest advisors or most potent servants are men. Perhaps her most infamous vassal—counselor, personal servant, bodyguard, messenger, and assassin—is Rheusendrous, a vile creature that seems to combine the worst aspects of hag and fomorian.

Not all of the Bramble Queen's victims are fortunate enough to perish swiftly. Many mortals who were charmed by her servants or captured by her hags or even by Selephra herself are kept in slave pens hidden in the deepest recesses of her Feywild forest demesne. These slaves are forced to serve as porters, physical laborers, and as convenient victims when the mood strikes Selephra to torment or slaughter a mortal. Slaves who survive long enough in Selephra's proximity eventually become wood brides and wind up serving her voluntarily.

RHEUSENDROUS

Rheusendrous's stats are not included in this article, because he and Selephra often shape his appearance and capabilities to the task at hand. If stats are needed, a good place to begin is with a fomorian butcher elevated to level 25 and with the Fewild denizen monster theme added, specifically the *distracting illusion* and *change shape* powers. But that is just one suggestion. Rheusendrous is a wily and dangerous opponent who never is caught unprepared. While he would not hesitate to die for Selephra if a situation demanded it, he has never been cornered into such a situation, and probably never will.

WOOD BRIDE

Animals and plants are not the only creatures subject to the whims of the Bramble Queen. Humanoids who dwell near her realm in the Feywild or near certain woods that she has cursed within the mortal realm slowly take on aspects of her nature. They slowly grow loyal to Selephra and act in her best interest even if they are unaware of it. Those not engaged in schemes for their queen spend their time luring mortal travelers to charmed enslavement.

Wood brides retain their previous appearance in most respects, but their backs gape open to reveal what appears to be a hollow carved of wood rather than flesh, muscle, or bone. This disfigurement can be hidden with heavy clothing, at least until victims are lured into the trap.

Male creatures with this template are called "wood grooms."

Prerequisite: Living fey or natural humanoid.

Gloaming Fey

Those servants of the Bramble Queen who do not hail from the Green Fey are almost all of the Gloaming. These creatures of the night, of magic, of darkness and deception, are frequently drawn to Selephra's banner, where they can give vent to their more sinister instincts without fear of repercussion. After all, it is the Green Court that takes the blame for the actions of the Bramble Queen's vassals.

Wood Bride **Elite Lurker**
Fey humanoid (plant) XP Elite

Initiative +4 (or +2 if the modified creature was a lurker)
HP (6 per level) + Constitution score + 6 low-light vision
Saving Throws +2
Speed forest walk
Action Points 1

Traits

Combat Advantage
The wood bride's attacks made with combat advantage deal 1d6 extra damage and daze the target until the end of the wood bride's next turn.
Level 11: 2d6 extra damage
Level 21: 3d6 extra damage

Fey Stealth
The wood bride may attempt a Stealth check, regardless of cover or concealment, any time it is adjacent to: any mundane tree or plant of Large size or larger; any ally of Medium size or larger with either the beast type or the plant keyword; or any creature it has dominated, of Medium size or larger. The wood bride must still end its turn with cover or concealment, or it can be seen normally.

Minor Actions

Dominating Kiss (charm) ✦ **At-Will (1/round)**
Requires combat advantage; level +3 vs. Will; The target is dominated (save ends). If the target is still under the effect of this power at the end of the encounter, the wood bride can sustain the effect indefinitely by kissing the target once per day; at this point, the target makes no further saving throws, and only Remove Affliction or similar magic can break the effect. The wood bride can have no more than one creature dominated by this power at any time.

Skills Bluff +4, Stealth +4

Green Fey

The Bramble Queen is not the most potent fey of the Green Court—her father, as well as a tiny handful of others, are mightier—but she remains potentially the deadliest. Her vassals make up a significant minority of the Green Fey, and they constantly press the others by calling in debts and intimidating weaker fey. Their goal is to to spread the court's influence and lash out against mortals. Lord Oran takes steps to curtail his daughter's most outlandish schemes, but he refuses to move against her or to allow his vassals to do so. Because of this, Selephra exercises more power within the Green Fey than she otherwise might, and the many who oppose her must do so in secret.

One tiny faction of the Green Fey does, however, work openly against the Bramble Queen. Until the day of his death, the satyr Enkaros blamed himself for what happened to the princess Selephra, and his descendents swore themselves to undoing his mistake. Despite the normally capricious tendencies of their race, this family of satyrs still works to curtail the worst evils of the Bramble Queen. They constantly seek some means, not of destroying her, but of returning her to the joyful creature she once was.

Winter Fey

Selephra has few official relations with the Winter Fey, but because many of that sect share her taste for violence and her disdain for mortals, her minions often work alongside them. Despite their shared hatred of mortals, the Bramble Queen and the Prince of Frost are not themselves allies. The slow, methodical, patient, and emotionless ways of the Lord of the Long Night are anathema to Selephra's hot-blooded, impetuous wrath.

Selephra, the Bramble Queen

Selephra prefers to appear as a beautiful, red-haired eladrin maiden—an echo of her original appearance. Her gown is a gorgeous array of green and gold, and her bare feet flit lightly amidst the roots and fallen leaves of the forest.

Those who pierce her illusory guise, however, could mistake her for a beautiful maiden only from a

The Bramble Queen	Level 27 Solo Skirmisher (leader)
Medium fey humanoid (plant)	XP 55,000
HP 896; **Bloodied** 448	**Initiative** +28
AC 41, **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 40	**Perception** +19
Speed 6 (forest walk), climb 6	low-light vision
Resist 25 poison	tremorsense 10
Saving Throws +5 (+10 against charm effects)	
Action Points 2	

Standard Actions

Claws of Bark ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +32 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage, and ongoing 15 damage (save ends).

Writhing Briar ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 4 (one creature); +30 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d10 + 15 damage, and either slide the target 3 squares or knock the target prone. If the Bramble Queen is bloodied, the target takes the damage and is instead slid 3 squares and also knocked prone.

Branches and Thorns ✦ At-Will

Effect: The Bramble Queen makes up to three *claws of bark* and/or *writhing briar* attacks, in any combination.

Lashing Briars ✦ Recharge when first bloodied

Attack: Close burst 4 (creatures in the burst); +30 vs. Reflex

Hit: 4d10 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**

Effect: The Bramble Queen can disguise herself to appear as any Medium humanoid, usually a beautiful elf or eladrin. A successful Insight check (opposed by the Bramble Queen's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Parasitic Germination (polymorph) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅

The Bramble Queen trades bodies with a plant ally within 10 squares. The queen and the ally swap positions, and also trade conditions or other ongoing effects.

Move Actions

Vine Step ✦ Recharge ⚁ ⚄ ⚅

Effect: The Bramble Queen shifts up to 8 squares, and can ignore difficult terrain and move through creatures during this shift. At any one point during the shift, the Bramble Queen can make a *claws of bark* or *writhing briar* attack.

Triggered Actions

Unseen Briar ✦ At-Will

Trigger: An enemy within 4 squares leaves a square or makes a ranged or area attack.

Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The Bramble Queen makes a *writhing briar* attack against the triggering enemy.

Prodding Briar ✦ At-Will

Trigger: An ally begins its turn within 4 squares of the Bramble Queen.

Effect (free action): The Bramble Queen slides the ally 3 squares.

Skills Arcana +23, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Insight +24, Intimidate +28, Nature +24

Str 18 (+17)	**Dex** 27 (+21)	**Wis** 23 (+19)
Con 26 (+21)	**Int** 21 (+18)	**Cha** 30 (+23)

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven; Selephra can speak with any plant or mundane animal

substantial distance. Selephra's body is riddled with brambles and thorn-covered vines. They protrude from the flesh of her feet and back, trailing in the dust or sliding almost sensuously across nearby trees or hedges. Her nails and teeth are jagged bark, and her eyes ooze sap like constant tears.

The Bramble Queen in Combat

In battle, or merely when displaying her power or her wrath, Selephra pushes herself high above the ground on the vines that protrude from her body, attaining heights far above any Medium creature. These tendrils are not only the source of her startling reach but also her ability to shift almost impossible distances and to climb at great speeds.

The Bramble Queen prefers to remain in motion and always keep several squares distant from her foes so that she can attack them without being hit in return. She's particularly fond of battling from behind a wall of her allies, making it that much harder for foes to close on her. She has no qualms about putting allies in harm's way and uses *parasitic germination* and *prodding briar* without care for the consequences to the target if it puts her in a better tactical position or allows her to foist off an ongoing effect.

Bramble Queen Lore (Arcana DC 30)

The character knows everything written under "History of the Bramble Queen" above, as well as the following:

Selephra can speak with any plant creature and with any mundane animal or plant (as per the Speak With Nature ritual). While she has no direct control over such entities, plant creatures and mundane animals who dwell within or near her wood tend to become loyal to and protective of the Bramble Queen, even if this contravenes their normal instinctive behaviors or alignment.

Bramble Queen Encounters

Selephra is never encountered alone. Whether traveling, hunting, holding court, or brooding in her woodland abode, she surrounds herself with at least a handful of vassals. These can range from other fey to animate plants to abnormally large or powerful animals. Some of her favorites include earthrage battlebriars, wild hunt hounds, and various eladrin, hags, and treants (advance these creatures to very high levels, as desired). She also keeps company with all manner of wood brides.

About the Author

Ari Marmell was born in New York, moved to Houston when he was a year old, moved to Austin when he was 27, but has spent most of his life living in other worlds through a combination of writing and roleplaying games. He has been writing more or less constantly for the last dozen years, though he has only been paid for it the past five. He is the author of multiple roleplaying game supplements including work on the Dungeons & Dragons® game. Ari lives in Austin with his wife George and two cats.

Poison Dusk, Black Sun

Explore Q'barra, Part 2

By Keith Baker

illustration by Christopher Burdet

'Duty before Glory.' So says the inscription on the gates of Ka'rhashan. Our ancestors carved this when they fled the western lands and returned to watch these dusty ruins. For a hundred generations we have been told that this is all we can aspire to, that we must guard these cursed cities until the end of time. I say no more! I say it is our duty to regain the glory we once possessed, to fulfill the promise of our blood. We have fallen from our path, and it is this that makes our children weak. Join me. Heed the call of battle. Let us know glory once again!

–Mishva Garodya of the Stormhorn Clan

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Dragonborn. Lizardfolk. Kobolds. Troglodytes. To the typical human of Q'barra, they are all the same … derisively referred to as scales. *Even those who know that dragonborn and lizardfolk are different species rarely care; at the end of the day, they are still scales.*

Superstitions about the scales are as wild as they are unfounded. In some of the tales, the scales hunger for human flesh. In others they consume dragonshards to survive, and this is why they attack Tharashk miners. It's common knowledge that the scales sacrifice their prisoners; the only question is whether their altars are dedicated to dragons or to demons. Everyone knows that the scales are savages, and that those with metal tools have traded for them or more likely stolen them from humans.

In the wake of the Mourning, the scales are growing restless. Every miner knows a story of a caravan raided or a village razed. Children frighten one another with tales of the obsidian palace in the deep jungle and the army massing there.

For decades, the relationship between settler and scale has been uneasy but stable. The Poison Dusk has remained a constant threat, but a balance was struck with the Cold Sun Federation, and an elder of the Ka'rhashan dragonborn accompanied King Sebastes to Thronehold in 996 YK. Now that fragile peace is beginning to snap. Cold Sun lizardfolk are raiding Tharashk mines. The attacks of the Poison Dusk are worse than ever. And there are rumors of scaled armies massing in the jungle–a force that could wipe the settlers from the land.

What has changed in recent years? Lord Khalar of House Tharashk blames the Mourning, claiming that the scales have heard of the cataclysm and believe that the settlers are weak. This is a theme that resonates with the settlers, who are as troubled as any by the devastation of Cyre. However, Tharashk's recent actions have had a greater impact on Q'barra than the Mourning has. Over the last decade, Tharashk has exponentially increased its dragonshard mining operations. Khalar believes that the lizardfolk are savages who have no idea what treasures they possess, and he would like nothing better than to assemble a force of ogres, trolls, and orcs to drive the Cold Sun tribes from their lands.

This ignorance is dangerous. The lizardfolk of the Cold Sun Federation aren't superstitious fools; they are battling to protect Q'barra from an evil older than humanity. Three cultures have played in the history of Q'barra. Three forces threaten the settlers in different ways. Adventurers must understand each if they are to protect the nation from the darkness that lies ahead.

MASVIRIK: THE COLD SUN

In the Age of Demons, the region now known as Q'barra was the domain of a fiendish overlord of terrifying power. He drew the light from the sky, and so his slaves called him Masvirik, "the Cold Sun," cousin to Tiamat. Masvirik has power over creatures of scale and fang and venomous things that slither through shadows. The dreaming priests of the Masvirik'Uala say that the Cold Sun formed kobolds and troglodytes from lizardfolk stock, creating beasts that were more vulnerable to his power. The existence of these creatures in distant lands calls this into question, but kobolds and troglodytes make up a larger percentage of the Poison Dusk than any other race.

Like many of the overlords, Masvirik's arrogance was his undoing. The dragons and couatl freed the lizardfolk from his influence, and they rose up against him. In time the Cold Sun was cast down, bound beneath his obsidian citadel, and trapped by the Silver Flame. The couatl sacrificed their lives to kindle that flame, but the dragons remained.

In time they dispatched the black dragon Rhashaak to watch over Q'barra. He was accompanied by a host of dragonborn soldiers, hand-picked from the legions of the Light of Siberys. These sentinels established garrisons at various demonic sites across the region. The worst of these was the resting place of Masvirik, which they renamed Haka'torvhak. Rhashaak made his home there, with the best of his soldiers, and there they waited.

For a thousand years the dragonborn served with distinction. As their population grew, they spread across the region. Another thousand years passed, and the young grew frustrated. They were a race of warriors waiting for a battle that might never come. Their skills were wasted, and the dragon lord of Haka'torvhak had little interest in their doings. Rhashaak's attention was confined to his city and to a spiritual battle no dragonborn could understand.

So the dragonborn ventured across the Endworld Mountains and into the plains that lay beyond. There they encountered a worthy challenge in the Empire of Dhakaan. Another thousand years passed as the dragonborn carved out their nation in the Blade Desert and Talenta Plains, the tides of the Goblin Wars waxing and waning. There were great triumphs and terrible defeats. It was a joyful time for a people who thrived in battle. But in building this new empire, they forgot the battle they'd been sent to fight, and this finally came back to haunt them.

In Haka'torvhak, Rhashaak had been holding the fiend Masvirik at bay through sheer force of will, until he finally faltered. The wards around Haka'torvhak trapped Rhashaak himself. While the fallen guardian couldn't leave the fortress, the influence of the Cold Sun spread across the land and the Poison Dusk was born. Kobolds, troglodytes, and the transformed dragonborn of Haka'torvhak rose up in arms. Across the empire, young dragonborn corrupted by Masvirik's power turned on their kin. As the empire collapsed, the dragonborn returned to Q'barra to face the source of the curse.

The dragonborn fought valiantly, but it wasn't a battle that could be won with courage or skill at arms alone. To this day, the dragonborn themselves don't realize the true source of their salvation.

The couatl that bound Masvirik left a failsafe in place. As the overlord's power grew, a pulse of radiant energy flowed across the land, filling Eberron dragonshards with the light of the Silver Flame. This power weakened the influence of Masvirik and the Poison Dusk and woke ancient memories in the lizardfolk. This was the creation of the dawn shards, and this web of light has kept the darkness at bay for thousands of years. Now House Tharashk is harvesting these shards in record numbers, and Masvirik's power is growing once more.

Masvirik has followers among the Lords of Dust, but he doesn't have a prakhutu on the Council of Ashtakala; Rhashaak is his voice, and the dragon is bound in Haka'torvhak. The Poison Dusk are his minions, and at the moment he has little influence beyond Q'barra.

Masvirik has some overlap with Zehir, and a Dungeon Master who wishes to place Zehir in Eberron could use the Cold Sun for this purpose. Masvirik could easily share Zehir's rivalry with his fellow overlord Tiamat.

Information about Masvirik is extraordinarily scarce. Even the dragonborn of Ka'rhashan remember little about this ancient fiend, having focused their attention on their battles against the Poison Dusk. The lizardfolk are among the only people who know anything about the overlord, and so far they haven't shared this lore with outsiders.

DRAGONBORN: THE CLANS OF KA'RHASHAN

The struggle against the Poison Dusk nearly destroyed the dragonborn of Khorvaire. Barely a tenth of their number survived the struggle. After the first scourging of Haka'torvhak, the influence of the Cold Sun grew weaker but it has never faded completely. The dragonborn couldn't kill Rhashaak or cleanse Haka'torvhak itself, and new servants of the Poison Dusk are inevitably drawn to the citadel. To this day, a certain percentage of every dragonborn generation falls prey to the corruption of the Poison Dusk. There have been times when entire clans have turned to the darkness and been exterminated by those around them. This has kept the dragonborn population low. They have never regained the numbers they had at the height of their power.

The Dragonborn Today

The dragonborn of Q'barra call themselves *Trothlorsvek*, "the defenders of the Prophecy." The Trothlorsvek live in the ruins of their empire, where they are bound by duty to fight a battle that cannot be won. They are split into clans, each of which can trace its lineage back to one of the regiments that came from Argonnessen and each of which once held greater territories in the fallen empire. Each clan is assigned to guard a site touched by fiendish power and to battle demons and corruption. What humans see as the "holy lands" of the dragonborn are actually the cursed sites they are charged to guard. They keep outsiders from these places lest strangers cause the ancient evils to rise again.

It has been thousands of years since Rhashaak's fall. The Poison Dusk remains a threat, and the Trothlorsvek must remain ever vigilant against the corruption of the young.

Ka'rhashan is the crown city, and the clan that holds Ka'rhashan speaks first at every gathering. Every five years a ritual battle is fought for control of the city. Long ago this battle was a prelude to an attack on Haka'torvhak; every five years the ruling clan would lead the others in scouring the cursed citadel. There was a time when dragonborn would slaughter kobolds on sight, as these creatures are most vulnerable to the corruption of the Poison Dusk. This zeal is fading. It has been thousands of years since Rhashaak's fall. The Poison Dusk remains a threat, and the Trothlorsvek must remain ever vigilant against the corruption of the young.

Some say that the influence of the Poison Dusk is a result of remaining in such close proximity to the demonic ruins or of staying out of battle for so long. These warriors scoff at the idea that the Poison Dusk would grow more powerful if they were to abandon their posts. Many young dragonborn dream of exploring distant realms and pitting their skills against new challenges. Some wish only for adventure, and this is the path of many dragonborn player characters. Other hunger for conquest and believe it is time for the dragonborn to go forth and reclaim their empire. This is the philosophy of Mishva of the Stormhorn Clan, and many warriors are heeding her call. More information about Mishva the Conqueror can be found in the *Eberron Campaign Guide*.

For now, the Flamebrow clan remains in control of Ka'rhashan. High Elder Bhisma has aligned himself with Newthrone. He has called upon the clans to hold to their ancient duties and forbids attacks on human towns. But Bhisma's authority is far from absolute, and even those who respect his words will still butcher outsiders who trespass onto the unhallowed grounds that the dragonborn protect.

Dragonborn Culture

The Clans of Ka'rhashan are a martial nation. They came to Khorvaire as an army, and they have never stopped fighting. Only the Valenar rival the dragonborn in dedication to the art of war. Where the Valenar fight to honor their ancestors, the dragonborn of Ka'rhashan are driven by a burning desire for glory—a smoldering urge to prove their skill against greater and greater challenges. It is this urge that underlies the growing discontent among the dragonborn.

Clan elders are often clerics who teach the tenets of the Draconic Sovereigns. These deities mirror the gods of the Sovereign Host and Dark Six, but they take the forms of dragons. They are thought to be dragon heroes from the Age of Demons who ascended to divinity and now influence the world.

Other clans are led by *ukristroth*, bards dedicated to the mysteries of the Prophecy and the history of the Trothlorsvek. While clerics guide the people in daily prayer, it is the ukristroth who adjudicate the ritual battles and who are urging the people to remember their ancient duty.

Despite losing their empire, the dragonborn are proud to the point of arrogance. They believe that the original defeat of the Poison Dusk was caused solely by the military might of the Trothlorsvek, and they dismiss any tales of dawn dragonshards as nonsense. Most consider the lizardfolk to be superstitious primitives, and they have long seen the kobolds as little more than animals. They are willing to trade with these races but not to treat them as equals.

The dragonborn place no special significance on the dragonshards, but they have no intention of allowing outsiders to pillage the lands they have sworn to guard. Pride, love of battle, and dreams of glory are the watchwords of the modern dragonborn, and this is laced with an iron backbone of duty that could rise again to the fore if their pride leads to disaster.

The Dragonborn in Battle

While the Trothlorsvek are dedicated to war, their talents are not limited to the martial power source. Sorcerers and paladins play a significant role in many clans, and clerics and bards support the people. There are excellent smiths among the clans, and although they live in crumbling cities, their warriors are clad in brilliantly enameled plate mail. Low-level magic arms and armor are common among their champions, and the champion of each clan bears an artifact forged in Argonnessen. Should a non-dragonborn ever acquire one of these artifacts, the sight of it would stir any Trothlorsvek to fury.

Mechanically, there is nothing unusual about the dragonborn of Ka'rhashan. They are skilled warriors, and Trothlorsvek NPCs will often have access to templates. Class templates are common, along with the Battle Champion, Bodyguard, and Devastator.

LIZARDFOLK: THE COLD SUN FEDERATION

Humans have no memory of the Age of Demons. Even the ancient elves were born long after the overlords were bound in Khyber. But the lizardfolk were there when fiends sacrificed couatl on obsidian altars. Their race is as ancient as the giants or the dragons themselves.

During the long uprising, the lizardfolk of ancient Q'barra aided the couatl in their struggle. Toward the end of that war, the couatl planted a seed in the collective unconscious of their lizardfolk allies to ensure that they would always remember the horrors of the past. To this day, when the lizardfolk of Q'barra sleep, they dream of the Age of Demons. They dream of the battles their ancestors fought. They dream of dragonfire and radiant serpents. And they dream of Masvirik, the demon overlord known as the Cold Sun.

The lizardfolk of Q'barra call themselves the *Masvirik'Uala*. The direct translation of this is *the Cold Sun Federation*, but the settlers who interact with the lizardfolk have long misinterpreted this name. The Masvirik'Uala aren't the Federation *of* the Cold Sun—they are the league that stands against it.

Their shared dreams define their culture, and they stand ready to face the overlord should he rise again. They fight the Poison Dusk whenever their paths cross. And they watch over the web of light that the great serpents planted in the earth-the dawn shards, dragonshards charged with the light of the Silver Flame.

The lizardfolk have no concept of legal documents … the Accords were … not a binding document. Nonetheless, whenever the settlers have held to the territories of the Accords, there has been peace.... Now the peace has been broken.

Lizardfolk Today

The lizardfolk of the Masvirik'Uala are a loose alliance of small tribes. They are hunters and gatherers who split to form new tribes any time their population grows to a level that cannot be supported by local resources. Many tribes are nomadic, but those that live in the areas rich in natural resources have established permanent villages.

The Masvirik'Uala have always kept their distance from settlers. There were clashes when the settlers first arrived, but the lizardfolk proved willing to cede certain regions to the outsiders.

Duke Venn brokered the Newthrone Accords, a series of maps establishing the regions the Masvirik'Uala held dear and would fight to maintain. The lizardfolk have no concept of legal documents. For them, the Accords were simply a statement of fact, not a binding document. Nonetheless, whenever the settlers have held to the territories of the Accords, there has been peace with the lizardfolk.

Now the peace has been broken. Masvirik'Uala lizardfolk are raiding caravans, killing prospectors, and attacking mining camps. Settlers have fought the Poison Dusk for decades, but this new wave of violence has shocked them with its brutality. When the lizardfolk are victorious in battle, they leave no survivors and no structure standing.

Lord Khalar of House Tharashk has condemned the lizardfolk as a threat to all the people of Q'barra. The facts are more complicated. Adventurers who investigate violent incidents will discover that all the attacks are tied to dragonshard mining. Only shard caravans are attacked. The villages that have been struck have all been supporting mining work, whether through House Tharashk or independent prospectors.

The most curious aspect is the fate of the shards themselves. The lizardfolk break every tool and kill every settler they find, but they leave behind large quantities of dragonshards. Among those leavings, there are never any dawn shards or dusk shards.

The attacks are carried out by nomadic tribes of lizardfolk. It is difficult to find these raiders in the deep jungles, though all of the tribes know of the violence. If questioned, a Masvirik'Uala elder will acknowledge the attacks and say that the warriors are "defending the light in the land." The outsiders are "stripping the light away and spreading the darkness, but the Cold Sun will rise again." Given that most outsiders know nothing of the ancient history of the region, most interpret the rise of the Cold Sun as a threat tied to the lizardfolk themselves, not realizing that the Cold Sun is actually what the lizardfolk seek to stop with their action.

The lizardfolk mean well. They oppose the horror they see in their dreams. But they do not understand

the outsiders. In their minds, the miners are one with the Poison Dusk–servants of the Cold Sun who seek to extinguish the light and spread the dusk shards. Those who serve the Cold Sun must be eliminated.

Perhaps there is a way to forge an understanding between Tharashk and the Masvirik'Uala, but this won't happen unless the prospectors are persuaded to abandon the lucrative trade in dusk and dawn shards. It will take more than scale superstition to accomplish that.

Lizardfolk Culture

Shared dreams define the culture of the Q'barran lizardfolk. The dreams bind the tribes together, but they have also kept lizardfolk culture stagnant; they live the same lives as their ancestors and model their actions on dreams.

The lizardfolk have no written language. Their most important stories and teachings come to them every night. The language of the tribes is an unusual and rather limited dialect of Draconic, and they are irritatingly concise in conversation. This is because of the shared dreams. Every lizardfolk has the same cultural references, and it is impossible for them to understand how an intelligent creature could fail to grasp these things. Thus, a lizardfolk priest will say "that one is Kurall's Claw" when he means "that one is a traitor who will kill you in your sleep." The priest doesn't know how to say it another way, and he doesn't understand why he'd need to—everyone knows the tale of Kurall's Claw. Effects such as *comprehend languages* are of limited use; the communication gap is not a question of translation but of context.

This has defined interaction with the lizardfolk ever since humanity arrived in the region. It has led to many misunderstandings, so that both lizardfolk and settlers consider the others to be simpletons. Player characters have an opportunity to be the first explorers to bridge this gap and establish a new bond between lizardfolk and settlers.

Another aspect of the shared dreams can impact players: the Draconic Prophecy. The dreams are records of events, but they also hold messages from the couatl, who mastered the lore of the Prophecy long ago. If the player characters have a role in the Prophecy, the lizardfolk may know of it. Depending on the characters' destiny, the lizardfolk may welcome them as heroes or greet them with inexplicable hostility. Though the Prophecy is never certain, this is an opportunity to set adventurers on a particular path. The Masvirik'Uala may know that the Stormchild with the Sixfold Scar must find the crystal sword and face the Black Wyrm in the Obsidian Tower. They don't know for certain that the outsider will triumph in this battle with Rhashaak.

Dragonshards play a vital role in lizardfolk society. Masvirik'Uala lizardfolk wear dawn shards as jewelry, and they embed the shards in weapons or tent poles. Villages deep in the jungle often have pits of dusk shards. Despite the seemingly casual attitude toward these, lizardfolk place a high value on the shards when trading or selling them. It is difficult for them to explain their reasons in terms explorers understand. Like so many things, to the lizardfolk, their reasons are common knowledge. Dawn shards hold the light; dusk shards channel the darkness and must be kept away from the Poison Dusk.

While the lizardfolk and the dragonborn both oppose the Poison Dusk, they rarely work together. The dragonborn consider the lizardfolk to be superstitious primitives, while the lizardfolk have the same problems communicating with the dragonborn as with humans. Besides that, they still remember that it was the first failing of the dragonborn that nearly unleashed Masvirik ages ago.

The Lizardfolk in Battle

The Masvirik'Uala are a primitive folk. They do not forge metal tools. They fashion their armor from hides, and their weapons are made from wood, bone, and dragonshards. Despite their primitive appearance, lizardfolk mystics are skilled at the art of enchanting weapons, so Masvirik'Uala champions may have powerful magical weapons and dragonshard augments.

While their appearance often leads adventurers to assume that theirs is a druidic culture, lizardfolk devotions draw on divine power, not primal spirits. They revere a nameless force of light that holds back darkness, symbolized by the silhouette of a winged serpent encircling a stylized, black sun. A student of religion who observes them long enough may recognize the truth: they are devoted to the Silver Flame. As such, Masvirik'Uala lizardfolk may use class templates for any divine or martial class.

They possess a surprising talent for battle derived from endless dreams of war, and the Savage Berserker, Devastator, and Battle Champion templates are all appropriate for their champions.

Masvirik'Uala lizardfolk make use of snares and traps around their villages. They are also adept at planting dragon's breath geodes in chokepoints, where lizardfolk spellcasters can detonate them to catch multiple enemies in the burst.

THE POISON DUSK

The settlers of Q'barra have never truly understood the Poison Dusk. The majority of settlers still believe that the Poison Dusk is one of the tribes of the Cold Sun federation and that the different species comprising it are all just different forms of lizardfolk—that the kobold, troglodyte, and blackscale lizardfolk share the same relationship as a goblin, hobgoblin, and bugbear.

Those who have studied the Dusk more closely recognize that it is an alliance of different species but have still drawn flawed conclusions. The most common among these is that the Poison Dusk are a cult that worship the dragon Rhashaak. It is true that Haka'torvhak is the stronghold of the Poison Dusk, and that they pay homage to the corrupted dragon, but this is because Rhashaak is the voice of the overlord Masvirik. The Poison Dusk is the harbinger of the Cold Sun.

Where do they come from? If the Poison Dusk is hated by both lizardfolk and dragonborn, how have they managed to survive?

Masvirik is immortal, and his essence pervades Q'barra. He has influence over all reptilian creatures. The web of dawn shards scattered across the land reduces his power but doesn't block it completely. Touched by the Silver Flame, the Masvirik'Uala lizardfolk are the most resistant to his power, while the kobolds of the region are the most easily corrupted. Beneath the surface of Q'barra, he is served by a host of troglodytes. New dragonborn are drawn to his service with every generation. His power is strongest in Haka'torvhak itself. This is why the dragonborn have never been able to completely cleanse Masvirik's stronghold. For generations they would raid the Haka'torvhak and slaughter all of Rhashaak's soldiers, but in time, new servants are drawn to the city. All too often, these new agents of the Poison Dusk include the dragonborn assigned to watch over it.

… the Poison Dusk and lizardfolk have been battling over dragonshards for thousands of years.

The Poison Dusk are fanatically devoted to Rhashaak and Masvirik. They serve with the fervor of the demonically possessed—and some of them are. The majority of Rhashaak's fiendish servants were bound along with the overlords. The dusk shards found across Q'barra hold fragments of these demonic beings, and this power can be transferred to agents of the Poison Dusk.

As a result, the Poison Dusk and lizardfolk have been battling over dragonshards for thousands of years. The Poison Dusk seeks to gather the dusk shards for their own purposes while reducing the areas covered by dawn shards. The lizardfolk wish to keep the dusk shards out of the hands of their enemies.

The arrival of House Tharashk has destroyed this balance of power. Thanks to the Mark of Finding, the dragonmarked house has recovered more dusk shards in the last ten years than the Poison Dusk has in the last thousand.

Thus, both the Masvirik'Uala and Poison Dusk attack Tharashk holdings. Where the lizardfolk do their best to cripple mining operations, the Poison Dusk take shards while otherwise leaving an operation intact. The Poison Dusk is happy to have Tharashk doing the work of prospecting and mining; they just want the shards.

Masvirik has no servants among the Lords of Dust. His fiendish agents are bound in dusk shards, and Rhashaak is his voice. He is a hateful being, filled with malice for all. For centuries he has simply sought to slaughter all those who will not serve him. It is only now, with the potential value he sees in House Tharashk, that Masvirik is trying more subtle schemes to attain his goals. One possible arc for a campaign would be to introduce yuan-ti to Q'barra, as humans newly transformed by the power of the Cold Sun. The Poison Dusk has never managed to destroy New Galifar by force … can it be corrupted from within?

The Poison Dusk in Battle

The Poison Dusk is comprised of kobolds, lizardfolk, troglodytes, and dragonborn. These come in three varieties.

Corrupted members of the Poison Dusk are driven by savage instinct. They are brutal and aggressive but rarely employ complex tactics unless under the leadership of a dusk shard cultist or fiendish vessel. Any existing creature of the appropriate race can be used with the Poison Dusk, though spellcasters are rarely found among them.

Dusk shard creatures can be identified by the sliver of dusk dragonshard embedded in their torso or forehead. The tiny shard strengthens their bond to Masvirik, and this in turn changes them in mind and body. Dusk shard creatures are innately more intelligent than lesser servants of the Poison Dusk, and any spellcasters serving the Poison Dusk will have dusk shards; their mystical knowledge is imparted through the shard. Dusk shard soldiers are better equipped

than the base, corrupted masses, and they have the skill to use fine weapons and armor. Many are physically transformed so that they possess serpentine or draconic traits and specifically resemble a black dragon. These mutations can be reflected by using the Snaketongue Cultist or Red Hand of Tiamat themes from *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* or the Dragontouched Destroyer template. Where a choice is given, powers from templates or themes should be tied to poison or acid.

Fiendish vessels are the most powerful agents of the Poison Dusk. These bear larger shards and are hosts for the trapped servants of Masvirik. The vessel is completely dominated by the fiend and speaks with the voice of the ancient spirit. The power of the vessel depends on the size and purity of its embedded shard. A vessel with a smaller shard should use the base statistics of a reptilian creature enhanced with the Slithering Idol template from *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*. A vessel with a larger shard is actually transformed into an avatar of the imprisoned spirit, and while it maintains the general appearance of the original host creature, you can use the statistics of the fiend or rakshasa associated with the shard. When the creature is slain, its body reverts to its original, natural shape.

The shards of a fiendish vessel or dusk shard cultist retain their power after the death of the bearer. This is the source of the shard pits in lizardfolk villages; shards are collected from fallen foes to keep them from being used again.

Normally it takes time for a shard to transform its bearer, but at the DM's discretion, the shard of a fiendish vessel could be so strong that an ally could pluck it from the chest of the fallen vessel and become a new host. In this case, the new vessel begins with hit points equal to its bloodied value. Any limited use abilities already expended by the previous vessel remain expended. Only a handful of shards with this level of power exist, but they are virtually impossible to destroy. The Poison Dusk will go to great lengths to regain such a shard if it is lost.

About the Author

Keith Baker has been an avid fan of the Dungeons & Dragons® game since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of Eberron to the Wizards of the Coast Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the *Eberron Campaign Setting* and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

ED GREENWOOD'S

Eye on the Realms

The Silent Sail

by Ed Greenwood ✦ illustration by Ben Wootten

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Small, secretive, local cabals of merchants are everywhere in the Realms, and seemingly always have been.

"After all," as the far-traveled merchant Berendigo Haelsharm of Baldur's Gate famously said, "making deals *is* trading—and every deal is, in one sense, an agreement to work together. Cabals are just traders who work together more than just on a lone deal . . . and what is more natural for a trader than to trust someone he's dealt successfully in the past? So there can be no trading without cabals, yes?"

It certainly seems as if "Brightsmile Berendigo" is right. Cabals beyond counting are everywhere in the Realms. Some merchants belong to four or five at once. It has been said that most merchants die not of lawbreaking or lack of coin but of running afoul of a cabal—one they belong to, two or more they belong to that end up having conflicting aims or activities, or just one they happen to be in the way of. Cabal troubles, even more than angry victims of swindles, are the reason so many merchants mysteriously fall out of high windows, fall 'asleep' on streets where heavily-laden wagons can roll over them, or go for swims in handy harbors while unconscious.

More than one sage or ruler has taken the view that while formal guilds are the largest and most public, they are not the most dangerous—guilds can be bribed, governed, "steered" or hampered by laws, and infiltrated. The most dangerous and effective cabals are the small ones (a trio of traders, up to perhaps nine merchants) whom "no one knows about." Until, as the saying goes, 'tis too late . . .

Silent By Nature

One of the most successful current cabals in a city infamous for its cabals is "The Silent Sail" of Marsember.

The Sail was formed by a handful of longtime trading partners, and its membership has never changed. All eleven Sail members are aging "self-made" Marsemban merchants (not nobles or from successful old-money merchant families) who have lived well for years on their earnings from the shipping trade.

Every Sail member owns at least six merchant vessels (caravels and cogs) plying the Inner Sea, though each one of them conceals their ownership of at least two of their ships by working through "chartrums" (Sembian companies) they control or by registering the vessels under fictitious owners. This isn't uncommon in Marsember; all eleven Sail members were doing so before they got together in their present, secretive group.

Shadow Sails and Chartrums

Many Marsembans are involved in smuggling, or at least concealing all of their activities from rivals as well as governments and tax-collectors, so having a "shadow sail" (a ship you control that isn't clearly associated with you) can be a handy thing.

One way of controlling a chartrum is by controlling its members. They might all be young apprentices or people who owe significant debts to you. They might all be under the thumb of one or two capable hirelings—usually athletic, violent, skillful actors acquainted with thievery and deception—who speak for the chartrum and do all the work (under your direction) while the remaining members are invalid family members, drug addicts controlled through the supply of their 'medicine', or even literal prisoners chained up in your cellar or in a remote Sembian hunting lodge. (More than one unscrupulous merchant has hidden a person from searchers by being drugged senseless and pinioned under the false floor of a stout pen at their hunting lodge where they keep an "aggressive, dangerous dog" chained up—an animal that they're keeping "because he's such a good breeder, and was my best hunting dog before that monster bit him and he went all crazed.")

The Marsemban Way

The perpetually damp and fog-shrouded port of Marsember has always been a haven for smugglers, outlaws, and fugitives from justice anywhere in the Inner Sea. Since it was first conquered by the Forest Kingdom, silent defiance of authority from afar has been the dominant local attitude, extending not just to the Crown of Cormyr but also to families, costers, and wealthy investors from Sembia, Westgate, or anywhere else where someone presumes to issue orders or seek to influence things to their will in Marsember.

Even local lawkeepers are deceived or avoided whenever possible, and only grudgingly obeyed; Marsembans recognize that "might makes right" and therefore that wealthy and powerful Marsembans can force at least a pecking-order on everyone. No Marsemban is going to admit to liking such realities or to accepting them out of any sense that they are "right."

It is almost expected that every Marsemban merchant who does more than keep a shop or "sling wares" (delivery and warehouse work, sorting and packaging) for an employer will do something illicit to make a few coins on the side.

Full-blown "traders" (merchants who own more than one wagon, or a ship that does more than just net fish, or who owns more than a few rent-earning city properties) are fully expected to do their share of slaving, drug-running, and moving of hot cargoes from port to port (including incognito travelers and even kidnapped individuals). In this sense, the veteran merchants in the Silent Sail are staunch and stereotypical Marsembans.

The Cast of the Cabal

The dominant members of the Silent Sail are these five:

- **Targrith "Tightcoins" Ambarthen:** balding, with a long, straight nose, bristling black brows, and hard-staring black eyes. A swift-witted, cunning man who thinks ahead and looks for the unseen factor or the new angle or wrinkle. Taciturn, but a dominant man, a leader. Now primarily interested in infiltrating Cormyrean and Sembian inspectors and courtiers before the Sail gets investigated.
- **Ruldragon "Ruldo" Sammurth:** red-haired, restless, handsome, jovial and loud; always merrily chasing young lasses, gambling (small, carefully-limited amounts), and buying flashy new clothes to wear. Calculating and ruthless behind all his laughter and flamboyance; likes to be swift and decisive. Has a small, secret-even-from-the-Sail band of professional killers who work on improving poisons at the same time as they develop new scents and sauces. Believes the future lies in scents that can temporarily adorn the skin with hues and "sheens" (sparkles, etc.) when applied.
- **Sacrask Hammerslyn:** a nasal, snapping, sarcastic pessimist who is swift to mock and mimic. Never forgets a name or face, and knows most active merchants in the Dragon Coast region. Believes big money is to be made not by selling specific goods but by mastering timing: always have the right wares for sale in the right place at the right time, so prices can be high but buyers grateful, not complaining of being "purse-tugged."

- **Omborr "Moonbelly" Moumbelrow:** a fat, stupid-looking man (his face looks like that of a child—a very sleepy child) with massive shoulders and forearms and two dangling wisps of mustache. Has become very wealthy by following his firm belief that coin is best made by improving wares: the nicest packaging, the right amount, the attached accessory (if selling a powdered spice, include a tiny scoop for dispensing it; if selling wine-flasks, make sure they have an attached drinking-cup).
- **Naskbryn Hallort:** thin, quiet, and spartan. Sad-eyed and droopy-mustached, has mastered looking tired and beaten. Believes in patiently growing richer by achieving little concessions in every deal (I sell you X for Y coins *and* get access to Z, or: I'll sell you A for B coins if you let me buy your C *and* sell them to no one else located in Selgaunt).
- **Drarra Jamrathrar:** wrinkled and stooped onetime beauty who began as a bedmate-for-hire and later made much coin procuring and pandering. Believes making patrons feel favored is the road to riches; build loyalties so clients always turn to you.

What The Sail Are Up To

Recently, the Sail has taken to doing something most merchants of Marsember and Westgate try only briefly and for specific purposes (usually with such poor results that increasingly this method is dismissed as "only working in tavern-tales" or "too dangerous for too little return"). They continually place multiple spies in the crews of ships owned by rivals, and in dockside shipping sheds of ports all around the Sea of Fallen Stars, to learn what cargoes are being carried—purely to try to predict when prices of particular goods will fall because a flood of fresh supply has arrived locally. The Silent Sail aims to always sell high and leave their rivals trying to sell for much lower prices (because Sail members have dumped large quantities of wagon wheels or lamp oil or whatever a rival's ship is carrying just before that vessel docks).

Many Sail rivals have begun to catch on to this practice. They don't yet know quite how it's being accomplished, so they are hiring adventurers (outsiders who are unknown to the trade) to try to snoop and find out. The Silent Sail are in turn instructing their undercover agents to eliminate such adventurers, either in "accidents" or by framing them for local crimes.

About the Author

Ed Greenwood is the man who unleashed the Forgotten Realms on an unsuspecting world. He works in libraries, writes fantasy, science fiction, horror, mystery, and even romance stories (sometimes all in the same novel), but he is still happiest churning out Realmslore, Realmslore, and more Realmslore. There are still a few rooms in his house with space left to pile up papers in . . .

Holiday Giving, D&D Style

by Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Typically this column is for Dungeon Masters. But this month I'm going to change it up a little bit. This month I'm talking directly to players. If you're a DM, feel free to read on, you could find it interesting, but make sure to let your player know about it. Maybe subtly, it's a little self serving.

OK, players, when is the last time you said thank you to your Dungeon Master? I know, some of you are on top of this. You say "thank you" at the end of every game. You pitch in for the pizza or bring great snacks. Most DMs don't ask for this or even expect it, and the players who step up are awesome. I definitely benefit from the generosity of my players in each campaign that I run. But I also know there are some of you who need to step it up a little.

This month I'm here to help. I know, times are rough and you may not have a lot of money to spread around, so I will keep things simple and relatively cheap. This is for all you last-minute gift givers! And especially those of you who didn't even think of doing this before reading this column.

Under a Jackson

There are plenty of great gifts that you can get your DMs that are under $20. The first thing you should do before you plop down your money is talk to your DM's friends and family. You don't want to plop down something the DM already has under the tree. Don't have time to grill a bunch of folks you barely know? OK, I got you covered.

Dungeon Tiles and *D&D Miniatures* are perfect small gifts for any DM. If you are really cash strapped, you can find packs of *Lords of Madness* minis online for about $15 apiece, not counting shipping. If you have a local game shop, skip the online retailers and give the gift of patronage to your local retailer. If everyone in your gaming group bought a box of minis, or a mix of minis and *Dungeon Tiles*, you'll have one happy DM, trust me.

How about stuff not produced by Wizards of the Coast? There's plenty of interesting stuff out there. One of my favorites is the Critical Hit LED D20 Die over at Think Geek. It flashes red when you roll a critical hit. That's geektastic! I'm sure many regular readers of this column already know about Think Geek, but for those of you who don't, check it out. My wife plies me with gifts from this place every year, and I'm always delighted.

I'm also a big fan of the Game Mastery Plot Twist Cards from Paizo. While some of the rules applications are designed specifically for D&D 3.5 and *Pathfinder*, the narrative structure of these cards work for almost any RPG. One of my Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition games uses these suckers with fantastic effect. The cards create a basic narrative bidding mechanic. A player uses cards to get out of a jam, the DM riffs off of it, and that push/pull creates a narrative that does what the player wants without screwing up the story.

Want something a little more customizable? Gift cards! If your DM has an iPhone or iPad, think about an iTunes gift card. Let them choose from gaming apps or new music for their gaming soundtrack. Gift cards from Amazon, any online game retailer, purveyor of PDF downloads, or—better yet—your local game store will always be greatly appreciated.

Craft (Gift)

I'll admit it; I've been spoiled. My players have stepped up over the holidays. But many of those gifts did not add to my sagging game shelves. Artist friends have given me drawings of the adventuring party; crafty ones have fashioned dice bags. One of my favorites is a leather dice bag with a line of

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spikes made to beat unruly players into submission (Thanks, Jay!).

Speaking of unruly players, one group made me "Shut the @#$% Up" coupons to use on someone who gets particularly rowdy. Though they rarely work, it was one of those rare gifts where the sentiment was more than enough. Some of the best gifts are there just to make a DM laugh.

Of course, some of the greatest gifts are edible. Cookies, cakes, interesting and savory appetizers are often well received. Just make sure you know your DM's food allergies before you start concocting. Oh, and make sure you are good at concocting. Burnt sweets aren't much fun, regardless of the thought.

Still broke? Not very good at making things? One of the best gifts you can make is the effort to communicate your appreciation. It's a small thing, but an important one. In the fervor of the game, the stream of rules arguments, backsies debates, and outbursts of nerd rage can create a soul-crushing haze. Take time to let your DM know that you're having a good time and enjoying the game, and you want to make sure he or she is too. Be a friend. That's worth more than the vaults of the over-king's treasury.

It's Time to Party!

Think about it; every week or so your DM throws you a party. They make the plans, ready the venue (or pack for the venue), create the adventure, and then run it until it's done.

Doesn't your DM deserve at least one party this year? I don't mean you need to get ribbon, cake, and all those birthday-party trimmings. If your DM has a favorite board game, play that. If your DM wants to try a new RPG, one of the usual players can run it. If your DM wants to go paintball, suit up. It's not that DMing isn't fun—it is, but it's time-consuming fun. Too often, DMs watch other interesting games and pastimes fly right on by. Just taking some time to make sure that doesn't happen will be greatly and warmly appreciated.

There are plenty of other possibilities; you know your DM better than I do. Good hunting and good luck.

Now, on to the mailbag. We are switching back over to DM advice, and we have some tricky ones this time.

Help, I'm Surrounded!

I've been playing D&D off and on for most of my adult life, but it usually is in short stints. I started with 2nd Edition AD&D, played a little 3.0, and now I'm running 4e. My problem is that I have a hard time saying no. Every time I run a game, it eventually balloons to nine or more players and then I burn out and quit for a while. It's taken me this long to realize it. How do I stop it?

–They're Closing In, via email

That is tricky. I've been there, suffered through it for a while, and done the same thing you've done in the past. Usually I have a valid reason for it, but I'm still grateful for the respite. One of the guys I work with has this problem, too, and his solution is to split the group. I don't know whether that's the best solution for you. If you're hoping to reduce your stress, I can't imagine that running two smaller games rather than one big game will help in the long run.

Your best bet for splitting the game may be to look at the players you have and see who else wants to be a DM. You could run one game for half the group while that person runs a game for other half—and you, as both a player and an at-the-table mentor. When you get busy or overwhelmed, you can leave the play group and just keep the manageable game you're DMing. That strategic retreat could be enough to keep you from getting burned out on gaming all together and no one's game gets shut down.

That One Player

I have a great group. We have very few rules arguments. Everyone has a good time. They like my campaign's story. It's awesome. For one player it is too awesome. He calls me or texts me all the time with questions about my campaign, ideas for his character, plot ideas I might want to consider. He goes on and on about the background of his character. His enthusiasm is overwhelming. How do I get him to simmer down without shutting down?

–Successful Sufferer, via email.

Shutting down an enthusiastic player risks triggering an angry backlash. You want to avoid that.

One thing to consider is whether you have a DM in the making. This player is already into building a detailed story. Ask the player if they've ever thought of running a game. Offer to play in it if you can, or at least to help him get it off the ground. If he is not getting enough D&D, DMing is a good way to remedy that.

But he may not be interested in DMing. He may just be really into his character. Get him to write a story and post it in a blog. Let this player be the group's wiki guru and the campaign's scribe and historian. That should keep him busy doing something he probably will enjoy. Players like this usually love taking charge of chronicling the groups' exploits and the campaign's progress. It's great escapism, it's productive and useful for the group, and it's excellent training for when he or she finally does want to step behind the DM's screen.

It's possible, though, that this player is just chatty. If that's the case, then let him down easy. Explain that you need time away from the campaign for your social obligations, for family and work, and to focus on developing the campaign without distractions. He wouldn't want the campaign to suffer, would he? You can set aside some time when it's OK to text and chat, but keep it to something you can manage and tolerate. Don't squash his enthusiasm, but make sure he understands that you have other things going on in your life. In these cases, the best solution is almost always plain old communication.

About the Author

Stephen Radney-MacFarland caught the D&D bug at an impressionable age. Once the content manager for the RPGA and a developer for the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons rules, he is now a freelance game designer doing work for Wizards of the Coast and Paizo Publishing, and he is part of a fledgling group of game commentators and game designers called NeoGrognard. During the daylight hours, he teaches game production classes at the International Academy of Design and Technology of Seattle.